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# The Guardian

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Stephen Lawrence

## The shameful truth unfolds

G2 with European weather

Women

## Zoe Ball: this time it's serious

G2 pages 8-9

Online

## Is paleontology for the birds?

G2 pages 12-13

# Police corruption exposed

## Contract killings linked to Met

Duncan Campbell  
Crime Correspondent

**C**ORRUPT Metropolitan police officers have been linked to contract killings, robberies and big drug deals, according to senior police sources. It is expected that between 20 and 40 officers could face charges in connection with corruption offences as Scotland Yard seeks to carry out its biggest clean-up for 25 years.

The Guardian learned of the depth of the inquiry as further raids on officers' homes were carried out yesterday morning. Two more of-

ficers have been suspended as part of the investigation.

Scotland Yard's largest ever team of anti-corruption officers, consisting of 125 hand-picked detectives, is investigating allegations involving a small number of the Met's previously most-respected and experienced detectives.

Now there are fears that corrupt officers may resort to "dirty tricks" to destabilise the investigation. At least one anti-corruption officer has been intimidated by suspect detectives and has had to be withdrawn from the investigation. There are concerns that corrupt officers may attempt to smear those pursuing them by planting false stories about them.

A small group of officers have already decided to give evidence against former colleagues and are being kept in safe houses while they assist officers from the anti-corruption branch. Immunity from prosecution and an amnesty could be offered to officers who cooperate with the investigation.

"These are clever, cynical and arrogant officers but they are also surreptitious and subterranean," said a senior source. "These are organised criminals within a police service."

It is anticipated that a large number of people who have been convicted on the word of corrupt officers will seek to have their convictions overturned. It is accepted that some of those convicted have been "fitted up" and are the victims of miscarriages of justice but that other guilty men may walk free because officers involved in their case turn out to be discredited.

A number of officers are already leaving the service in



anticipation of the investigation. Others are expected to follow.

The detectives involved have become much more sophisticated since the early seventies when they were ostentatious about their corruptly-acquired wealth, driv-



Metropolitan commissioner Paul Condon: purging force

ing Alfa Romeos and spending lavishly in clubs. Now officers spend their money in a less obvious way and have been explaining their lifestyles by claiming that they have inherited money or been successful gamblers.

Senior officers accept that

the Metropolitan police is about to enter a crucial phase. But they believe that the "boil has to be lanced".

What has astonished investigating officers is the level of corruption involved, with officers setting up robberies and drug deals rather than just taking bribes or stealing the proceeds of drug crimes. It is understood that some officers have even been on the fringes of setting up contract killings and have been prepared to put at risk the lives of their own colleagues.

"These are professional criminals who happen to be police officers," said a source. "This is at the top end of criminality. Why is it happening? A combination of opportunity and human frailty."

Whereas in the seventies it was argued that officers were badly paid for long hours and dangerous work and thus subject to temptation, that excuse has less water since the pay has increased. Reviews recommended by Lord Edmund-Davies in 1979.

What worries senior officers is that among those believed to be involved are some of the most respected detectives in the force. There is concern, too, about other large inner-city police forces in England where the temptations are as great as in London.

It emerged earlier this year that a secret team had been set up to investigate corruption in the Metropolitan police. The team included serving officers, trusted former officers and those with experience from the intelligence services.

What is different about the current inquiry from that of the early seventies is that this one has originated from within Scotland Yard rather than being the result of pressure from outside.

Commissioner Sir Paul Condon has made it clear that he would like to see the force purged before he finishes his seven-year term. His new deputy, John Stevens, who has responsibility for the corrup-

tion inquiry, previously carried out the inquiry into alleged links between paramilitaries and the RUC in Northern Ireland.

By the end of Sir Robert Mark's era in 1976, 476 officers had left and 12 had been jailed. Since then, senior officers say it has been more difficult to get rid of suspect officers. New police disciplinary regulations making the process simpler have been agreed by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and come into place early next year.

The implications of what is now happening are enormous in that a large part of the Metropolitan police's budget is now being taken up with investigating fellow-officers. Sir Paul Condon has said that the overwhelming majority of his officers are brave and honest but that there is a very small percentage of corrupt officers, totalling between 100 and 200, who have damaged the reputation of the service and who must be rooted out.



Sampaio is mobbed after scoring Brazil's first goal in the 2-1 defeat of Scotland in the World Cup. PHOTOGRAPH: DESMOND BOYLAN

## Great Scots, but traditional losers

John Duncan in Paris

**G**OODBYE to the hype, farewell to the phoney war, the World Cup has finally begun and with traditional glorious defeat for Scotland.

The Scots, expected to lose by a hatful of perfectly struck Brazilian goals, lost 2-1 to a routine near-post

header by Cesar Sampaio, and an own goal by Tommy Boyd. A John Collins penalty gave Scotland hope for an hour or so.

An estimated 10,000 Scots were in Paris, only half of whom got into the game. Many, kilted and boisterous, had gathered at the Eiffel Tower and the Arc-de-Triomphe, some wearing their opponents' colours.

"They are like us," said Joao Narayana, aged 25, from Brasilia. "They like a party and they know football is a game."

The Jockers were out in force. Ewan McGregor, Sean Connery, Jackie Stewart and Rod Stewart among them. They mingled with Scottish government ministers, including Donald Dewar and Gordon, defying

a ban on taking up offers of seats at the Stade de France.

Tickets changed hands for up to £1,000, or would have, if anyone had been in the mood to sell. "I'll give you £500 for yours," pleaded James McCourt of Glasgow. He didn't look like he expected any luck.

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Sport, pages 14-16

## Britain throws EU budget into chaos

Court win blocks aid payments, job schemes and disabled help

Martin Walker in Brussels

**B**ITAIN was last night held responsible for plunging Europe's budgetary machine into chaos.

Blocking over £280 million of Europe's social budget and forcing the closure of the European Commission's computerised payments system.

On the eve of the European Union summit in Cardiff, hosted by Tony Blair and intended as the high point of the British presidency, a Government lawsuit has forced the Commission to suspend payments for foreign aid projects, job creation schemes, food inspections, the disabled, and Welsh and Gaelic language television and radio services.

Even Princess Diana's cherished campaign against landmines has seen its £5 million grant suspended.

A British victory in the European Court of Justice which questioned the legal basis of much of the Commission's discretionary spending, though it had been approved by Parliament — led Brussels yesterday to suspend what one commissioner called "the money that integrates Europe in a way that our people can see it at work".

"This is a mortal challenge to the human face of Europe that we keep talking about. This is some of the most valuable work we do," said the social affairs commissioner, Padraig Flynn, last night.

"And it could get worse. The current hit-list is the result of the first trawl through our budgets looking for items that might not fit the court's criteria. We could be looking at Europe's budget twice or three times higher."

The biggest victim in this hit-list of Europe's good causes is the developing world. A total of £135 million for organisations such as Oxfam and Christian Aid in this year's EU budget is to be suspended, and spending for next year is now in limbo. The Commission itself is "dismayed" by the implication of Britain's legal success.

"Many of these programmes are ones that I personally want to support, but I have to run the budget according to the law, and after this court ruling I cannot break the law," the EU budget commissioner, Erkki Liikanen, said yesterday. "This is a terrible dilemma for the Commission."

The consumer affairs commissioner, Emma Bonino, told colleagues yesterday that she might have to close down the entire food health inspection service.

Fearing further embarrassment for Britain, the Commission yesterday refused to publish the hit-list of suspended projects. Nor have the affected organisations and humanitarian causes been officially informed of their fate. But a copy of the list has been obtained by the Guardian.

After initially claiming a

victory for the taxpayers, British officials were yesterday rocked — but unrepentant — as they realised the political implications of what they had done.

"The UK does not feel any great guilt for having initiated this legal action," an official spokeswoman for the British mission in Brussels said last night. "We are pleased that the court ruled in our favour, but we will be pleased to look at any proposal for resolving these issues that the Commission now comes up with."

The EU's £285 million return to page 2, column 3

Europe loses its friendly face, page 6



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## Sketch

## A lickspittle with his wires crossed



Simon Hoggart

MR BLAIR began Prime Minister's Questions with the ritual offer of support to our gallant lads in France. "I am sure the whole House joins me in wishing the Scotland and England teams the best of luck."

It hasn't worked, so far at least. First hospital waiting lists, then class sizes, and now the disappointing, if plucky, Scotland result. At least Labour didn't promise an England v. Scotland final on their election pledge card. If they had, Mr Blair would again be blaming 18 years of Tory mismanagement of sport for his own failure to keep his own promises.

Don Touhig (Lab, Islwyn), like pub bores up and down the land, kept the topic on football. He was shocked that one Tory peer, the Earl of Onslow, had claimed he would fight government plans to reform the Lords. "I would be proud to go out as a football hooligan," the seventh earl has said.

"I am sure that members... think that football hooligans are a mindless lot, and would want to condemn that statement," Mr Touhig said. I suspect that the earl was speaking metaphorically, but Mr Touhig appeared under the impression that he had personally offered to kick Ulrika Jonsson round every bar in Paris if the Government went ahead with its plans.

Mr Blair warned Tory peers that, if they stymied Lords reform, they would be committing "the greatest constitutional outrage of all". Hum. Those of us who have read books rather than just briefing papers know that Lords Reform is a vast slough which has trapped many governments and sucked them down to despair, most recently the 1968-70 Labour administration. But New Labour has no more sense of the past than a day-old baby, and believes

that history began the day Mr Blair became party leader.

Last week, Andrew Mackinlay (Lab, Thurrock) started the House with a passionate denunciation of Tories who ask planted questions. Nobody thought that this would stanch the spray of glutinous praise showered over the Prime Minister but at least yesterday we had the joy of seeing one scoundrel getting what he deserved.

Roger Casale, the Labour victor of Wimbledon, had not tabled a question, but these days that doesn't matter. Willing groaners are scattered around the House ready to use their long, sticky tongues in the prime ministerial service. Mr Casale was called by the Speaker and had his "question time" interrupted by a heckler.

He praised "Wimbledon Park school, where, thanks to this government's New Deal for Schools, all the children are wired up to computers!" It wasn't a very funny slip, but so great is the distillation of fat for the lickspittles, by all Tories and a growing number of Labour MPs, that the House collapsed with laughter. Some of the older Old Labourites on the front bench below the gangway roared so loud and went so red that I was reminded of the condition which occurs when a Viagra tablet sends the blood in the wrong direction.

Mr Casale appeared entirely nonplussed by this reaction. It is, after all, possible that he is wired up to a computer himself, with a microchip receiver sending instructions from Millbank direct to his brain.

Unable to do anything other than repeat what he has been programmed to utter, he stumbled on through ribald mockery, "... and even helping their local MP track down the Wombles on the Internet," he finished limply, as the jeers turned to pitying groans. Mr Blair merely replied: "There is still a long way to go," a remark which, if it were Mr Cunningham, would cause a horrid little squiggly spasm in my stomach.

## Review

## Boy and his Club kiss and make up

Caroline Sullivan

Boy George/Dannii Minogue  
Royal Albert Hall

BOY George and Kylie's younger sister — not only a dream team for connoisseurs of camp pop but a study in how to manage (or not) a career past its peak.

When the hits dried up, George simply diversified. His current CV lists him as a club DJ, newspaper columnist, record company executive and radio host, which keeps him so busy he's cut his gig schedule down to an annual well-attended Albert Hall date.

Dannii Minogue approached the problem differently. When her shrill disco tunes stopped bothering the Top 10, she reinvented herself with silicone and peroxide for that Australian-barmaloid look. It netted one more hit, but last year's album was a flop.

Her Albert Hall support slot — the biggest venue she has played in Britain and far too cavernous for her small-scale nightclub act — must have been hell on her ego.

George's fans, most of whom, true to stereotype, were gay men or old Culture Club fans, gave her a warm reception. It was probably warmer than she deserved, given her reliance on her physical assets to divert attention from her slim repertoire.

Her redeeming qualities were her have-a-go attitude and, unexpectedly, her voice: a dormouse on disc, she turns into a tigress on stage. Kylie herself couldn't have kitsched it up better. But while she gamely inquired, "Are there any queens in the house?", Dannii has a long way to go before she matches George's queenly majesty.

His tumultuous past has endowed him with not merely a taste for ludicrous headgear but with a steely dignity that contrasts sharply with the sharp-tongued drag queen of 15 years ago.

He couldn't resist the odd risqué *bon mot*, urging the audience, who were up and dancing as soon as he appeared, to "Get 'em off" and "Feel free to shake your goontang".

But this George is a different person: slimmer, more confident and younger-looking than a nearly-37-year-old has a right to be. A slightly diminished range, mostly affecting his top notes, seemed scant price to pay.

In the event, he got vigorous vocal support from an industrial-sized backing female, who yodeled lungfully for England on old faves like Church of the Poison Mind and I'll Tumble For Ya. Time has been kind to George's hits that made up the first half of the set.

And now, he announced with a flourish of his red top hat, the new Culture Club single. That's the big news, that this definitively eighties band, who split acrimoniously a decade ago, are re-forming for an autumn tour.

"They've been recording in the meantime, and he previewed several numbers here. They erred on the side of pleasant reggae-lite, and were overshadowed by the arrival of two unannounced guests, Culture Club's Mikey Craig and Jon Moss, who haven't shared a stage with George in 12 years. The applause for both was overwhelming. The Boy — and friends — are back. This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

Report alleges wartime racism and hushed-up government scheme to keep out Jewish refugees

## Swiss were 'in grip of Nazis'

Ian Traynor in Bern

SWITZERLAND'S blemished wartime reputation suffered another blow yesterday when an American Jewish investigation uncovered evidence of rampant anti-Semitism pervading all levels of wartime Swiss society and of a hushed-up government scheme to keep Jewish refugees out of the country.

In a report that accused Switzerland of pandering to home-grown Nazi sympathisers — and triggered extremely angry denials from the Swiss government — the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre also alleged that Swiss neutrality was all but notional during the second world war since the country was in the grip of

dozens of public or clandestine racist and anti-Semitic organisations.

"They practised no neutrality whatsoever," said the author of the 128-page report, US historian Alan Schom.

"The extraordinary variety and number of associations and societies in Switzerland representing the extreme right — patriotic, fascist or both — during the Hitlerian era is most striking," said the report, released yesterday in New York following exhaustive research in the Swiss national archives.

Such claims follow 18 months of revelations about the scale of collaboration between the Swiss banks and Nazi Germany. The debate has punctured the Swiss myth that they resisted Nazi pressure, and has led to a sober appraisal of the role of the national bank in selling and

dealing in gold looted by the Nazis from Holocaust victims and Axis-occupied countries.

But the Swiss are now briding at further attacks on their war record, which they feel that have done more than most to come to terms with. In an unusually heated reaction to the report's claims, the Swiss president and foreign minister, Flavio Cotti, rejected the allegations as "untenable and perfidious".

"This report insults an entire generation. It also defames the current Swiss authorities," he declared yesterday.

Contradicting Swiss government assertions that Nazi sympathisers constituted a negligible minority during the war, the report said the country was saturated by organised anti-Semites. Mr Schom said there were around 40 such clubs and

secret societies operating in more than 160 Swiss towns and cities.

"The Swiss were always for the Germans," Mr Schom told US television. "They thought the Germans were going to win the war."

Yesterday's report highlighted the wartime government's dealings with the Swiss Fatherland Association, an obscure but powerful anti-Semitic and nationalist organisation of top business-men and senior army officers which lobbied the government to keep out Jewish refugees.

On the 50th anniversary of the war's end, three years ago, the Swiss government apologised for turning back tens of thousands of Jewish refugees during the war. It had also admitted some 27,000.

during the war, met anti-Semitic leaders secretly and repeatedly to co-ordinate plans for keeping out Jewish refugees.

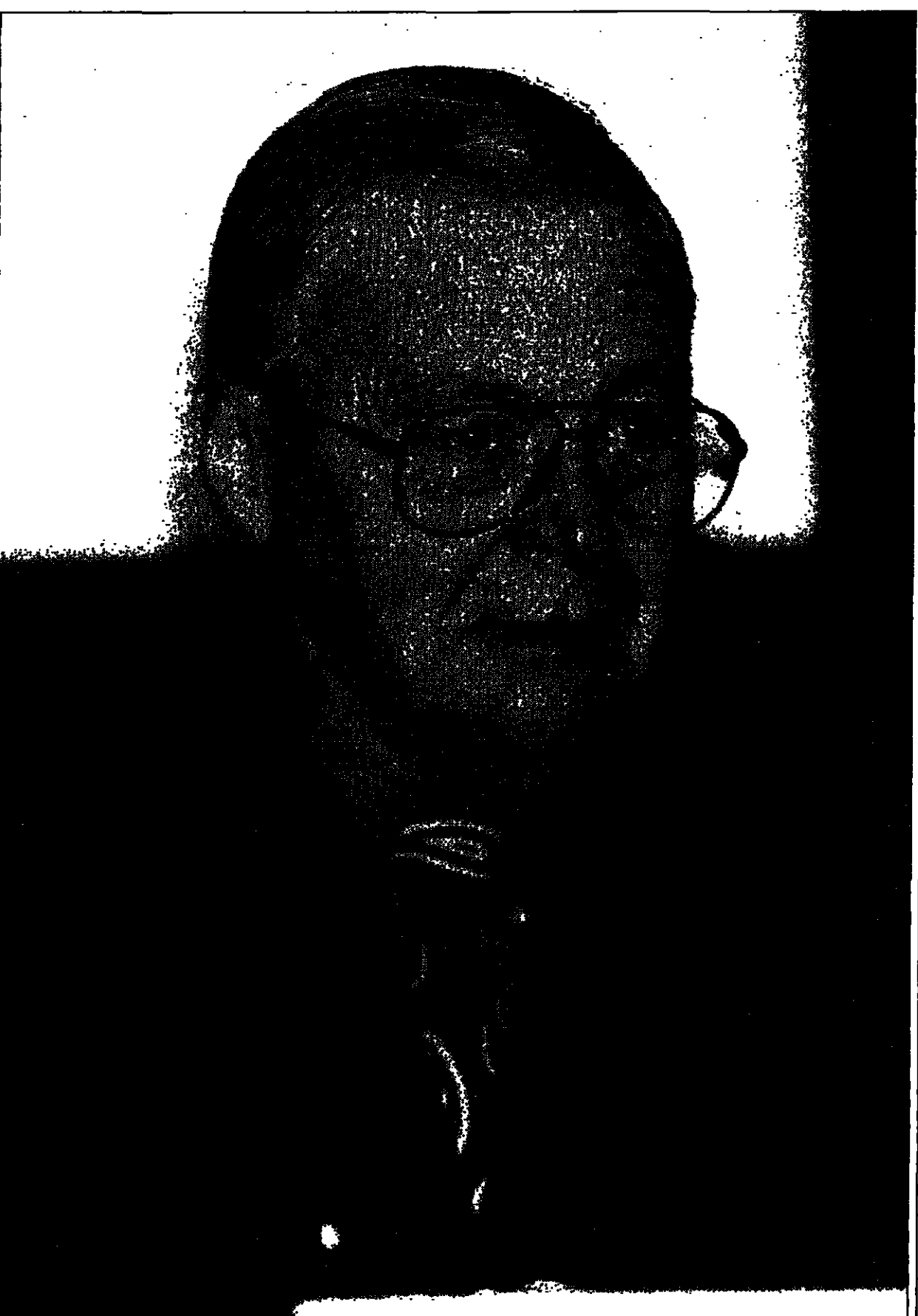
Citing Swiss minutes of the meetings in 1942 and 1943, the Wiesenthal Centre reported that Steiger assured that the government had decided on a "fundamental slowing" of refugee admissions and asked the racists to tone down their anti-immigration rhetoric since government policy was quietly but effectively producing the results they wanted. Steiger insisted that the meetings and the policy be kept secret, the minutes record.

He assured the lobbyists that "more severe measures are in place against refugees at the border", but the association officials pushed for a more explicitly anti-Semitic propaganda offensive from

the government, telling Steiger that "whether one likes it or not, this is a question of race".

Steiger was quoted as telling the racists that a small number of Jewish refugees had to be admitted to prove the problems of living with foreign Jews. While the steady drip-feed of revelations emerging in the past two years mainly from US investigations has focused on Switzerland's role, Ignatz Bubis, Germany's Jewish leader, said there had to be closer scrutiny of banks in Britain and the US too because of their profiteering at the expense of Holocaust victims.

"It is emerging that there were accounts in Britain, too, the same as in Switzerland, of Jews who sought to flee Germany but didn't survive. The British state cashed in these accounts," he claimed.



Sir David English: started as a copy boy after school and 'never lost his love and enthusiasm for his chosen profession'

## Mail editor and media mastermind dies at 67

Michael White

SIR David English, one of the 20th century's most influential and politically astute Fleet Street editors died unexpectedly yesterday. He was 67 and had suffered a stroke.

The man who turned the ailing Daily Mail into a tabloid and made it a market leader, was widely praised last night as a consummate operator in the shadowy world which links Westminster with Fleet Street.

Knighted by Margaret Thatcher, to whom the newspapers under his direction gave unstinting support, Sir David and his proprietor, Lord Rothermere, became disenchanted with the rudderless drift of the Conservatives under John Major.

The paper which had consistently been Labour's chief tormentor since the 1920s effected a reconciliation with the Opposition, largely through Tony Blair, the only Kinnock shadow cabinet member willing to lunch with them in the late eighties.

Last night the Prime Minister said he was "shocked and saddened" by the death. He said: "I counted David English as a friend. He was a truly outstanding journalist. He never lost his love and enthusiasm for his chosen profession and never lost his eye for a good story."

The Prime Minister's spokesman said Sir David was to have been made a life peer in this Saturday's birthday honours.

Lord Wakeham, the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, of which Sir David was a member, said: "David was a giant of British journalism. A champion of a free press and a champion of a responsible press, he has left an indelible impression on his profession."

The editor of the Guardian, Alan Rusbridger, said: "He was an inspired editor and a brilliant exponent of tabloid journalism. He was also a shrewd political fixer; someone who gave endless time and encouragement to younger journalists and someone who genuinely cared about — and battled for — the freedom of the press."

The friendship relationship with Labour contributed significantly to the easy ride from the Tory tabloids which helped Labour into power in May 1997. Unlike the Sun, which backed Labour at Rupert Murdoch's specific di-

rection, the Mail knew its readers in middle England well enough not to go that far. But, thanks to Sir David's skills, it deftly pulled its punches.

By this time he had given up a 21-year editorship of the Daily Mail to Paul Dacre, to become editor-in-chief and chairman of Associated Newspapers.

His career in newspapers began when he joined the Bournemouth Evening Echo as a copy boy straight from school. Within a couple of years he was on the left-centre Daily Mirror, where he gained a reputation for aggressive reporting. He was remembered for a particularly juicy scoop about Errol Flynn's sex life when he was Washington correspondent of the Sunday Dispatch, and for stealing mailbags to show the lax security of British Rail while on Reynolds News.

He was foreign editor at the Daily Express when the paper was still in its glory days with a circulation of three-and-a-half million.

Lord Rothermere, who had befriended Sir David in the 1930s, headhunted him to be editor of the Daily Sketch in 1968. When the Sketch was merged with the Mail two years later, Sir David took the helm of Associated's flagship. He was 40.

The Mail's influence grew to a point where even those colleagues in the broadsheet press, radio and TV who loathed its aggressive right-wing populism, respected its formidable professionalism. The phrase "the tabloid agenda" in both politics and media became an oblique tribute to his influence.

Lord Rothermere claimed throughout that he appointed good editors and did not interfere with them. Whatever the exact relationship, it was a formidable partnership which revived the financial and editorial fortunes of the last British-owned Fleet Street dynasty.

Sir David, a father of three, married for 44 years, said of Lady Thatcher: "We supported her for many reasons — maybe because she was a woman. But she had new ideas, and the Tory party needed new ideas."

They had more than that in common, coming from the provincial lower middle-class, Methodist and hard-working. Sir David's sidelines included a small chain of laundrettes. Lord Rothermere once referred to his most successful prodigy simply as "God".

spln-doctor wines. On the day the World Cup opened, the EU had to suspend its £2 million sport budget. And in the week President Bill Clinton and the United Nations held a conference on international co-operation in the war on drugs, the EU had to suspend its £900,000 anti-drugs budget.

## British court win throws European social budget into chaos

continued from page 1  
gramme in support of human rights and democracy around the world has been targeted, along with \$7 million in special aid to Bosnia. The hit-list also includes items with serious implications for foreign policy, such as the financial co-operation project with Turkey, and

economically important items including the export promotion budget for Japan. "This is so dramatic that there are no words to describe what this will do to all our projects in the developing world," said Sam Biesemanns for the European liaison committee of non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), such as Oxfam and Christian Aid. "The EU depends on us to carry out its development goals and suddenly our budgets are suspended."

Urgent efforts were being made by MEPs and officials to prevent the cuts from destabilising aid operations. Labour's

Glenns Kinnock said that she was "hopeful that within a few weeks we can have the NGO's budgets restored to a legal basis". But NGOs have been warned they face a freeze on payments that will last at least through summer.

The hit-list contains items to make a Downing Street

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A family of businesses

صوتنا من الامم

Unless he does some Saturday it's a safe bet Honours List is unlikely finally get what he needs Michael White on the Tor

As of this week, if Dorothy Patterson (right) wants to be a good Southern Baptist, she must submit herself graciously to the leadership of her husband, Paige. And if she doesn't, the church will soon know about it - he's the president



# Brown plans big increase in public spending

**Larry Elliott**  
**Economics Editor**

THE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, is to sanction a mass programme of repairs to Britain's crumbling infrastructure as the centrepiece of a Treasury plan to reverse the deep cuts in public investment over the past five years. Backed by the CBI and the TUC, Mr Brown is considering proposals that would add up to £2 billion a year on average to public investment over the next three to four years while meeting the Government's tough rules on spending.

The Chancellor - who will outline his twin-track approach to public spending in his speech to the City's elite at the Mansion House tonight - is convinced that the Government should concentrate its resources on upgrading hospital wards and derelict homes.

But Treasury officials have told him that this would incur a hefty current account cost because employing new teachers, doctors and nurses to staff them would add to the state's pay bill.

As a result, increased spending on new infrastructure projects will be modest and channelled primarily into transport, where the extra current account spending costs would be minimal, rather than into the NHS and education.

There will also be extra spending on the huge backlog of repairs and much-needed improvements to classrooms, wards and public housing caused by the relentless squeeze on capital spending in recent years.

"The school population hasn't changed. We don't need more schools, but on a given site we might need more modern buildings," said one Treasury source, stressing that there could be savings for the Government from more efficient buildings.

Treasury officials have taken on board research by a top City analyst, who is arguing that the Government could increase public spending by 2.75 per cent over the next three years - including a 25 per cent annual rise in capital investment - while

also meeting its two fiscal rules.

David Walton, of Goldman Sachs, said that current spending would remain healthy in the black, while the ratio of public debt to gross domestic product would fall from 62 per cent to 45 per cent.

Treasury sources said that Mr Walton's figures for investment spending were "a bit on the optimistic side" but agreed that the Government was keen to get away from the idea that all public spending was bad for the economy.

"We couldn't do quite as well as that, but we are certainly exploring the possibilities of a substantial increase," one said.

Public spending has been flat in the first two years of the current parliament, and

**Proposal would cost £2bn a year but still meet tough fiscal rules**

even an increase of 2.75 per cent a year in the final three years would mean an average increase in the full five years of only 1.75 per cent - little changed on the record of the Conservatives.

Adam Turner, director-general of the CBI, last night gave his backing to higher investment spending.

"Over the past five years, publicly sponsored capital investment - including that for the Private Finance Initiative - has fallen by nearly 25 per cent in real terms, and our public capital expenditure is now 1.3 per cent of GDP, well below that of our competitor countries," Mr Turner said.

"So the Government needs now to place priority on increased capital spending - on transport infrastructure, on school and university buildings and research equipment - and must not allow the growth of current spending to squeeze out this vital investment."

"Within current budgets, education and scientific research expenditure must be recognised as key investments for future economic success."

# Church tells wives who's boss

Joanna Cole in New York

THE Southern Baptists, America's largest Protestant group with 16 million members including President Clinton, have amended their basic statement of beliefs to include the declaration that a wife must "submit herself graciously" to her husband's leadership.

It was also agreed that a woman must accept she has the "God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing their household and nurturing the next generation".

Paige Patterson, the Baptists' new president, said the decision to include the amendment, which was overwhelmingly supported by members at this year's annual convention in Salt Lake City, was in response to "a time of growing crisis in the family".

The move brings the Baptists into line with the Promise Keepers, a fast-growing band of Christian men who claim to have turned their backs on infidelity and alcohol in order to resume their rightful place as head of the family.

Although the Baptists' amendment stresses that men and women have equal worth in the eyes of God, it is unequivocal when it comes to power-sharing in the marriage. Taking its lead from the Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 22-33, it compares the husband's role in marriage to that of Christ ruling the Church and says the wife should submit to her husband's leadership "as the Church willingly submits to the headship of Christ".

"The decision to support the amendment reflects the increasingly conservative tone of the Southern Baptists, who last year orchestrated a boycott of the Walt Disney Corporation in protest at its television network, ABC, running



... but divorce, abortion and homosexuality are not welcome

the sitcom *Ellen*, featuring the gay comedienne Ellen DeGeneres. In particular, the Church was outraged when *Ellen's* character came out. Although ABC claimed the boycott had no effect, the series was dropped earlier last month. It said the show was losing ratings and was no longer funny. A furious DeGeneres denied that.

The previous year, the Southern Baptists caused uproar when they declared they were appointing a missionary specifically to evangelise Jews.

Although, technically, no Southern Baptist is forced to agree with the organisation's Faith and Message statement, the decision to tell women to submit to their husbands reinforces the movement's conservative swing, which began in 1979 when a traditional tendency took over the leadership and gradually pushed several leading seminaries to the right.

Preserving the nuclear family is seen as the keystone to a healthy society, composed of people related by marriage, blood or adoption. Homosexuality, abortion and divorce are not options.

The amendment is also significant because it is only the

second time the basic Faith and Message statement, which was drawn up amid controversy in 1925, has been altered. In 1963 an amendment was added relating to the desirability of higher education, but otherwise the message has been left intact.

Until recently it was seen as more of a theological statement concerning God and the Church rather than commenting on social concerns.

When the original statement was being drawn up in the 1920s there was much argument between liberals and fundamentalists about the interpretation of the Bible.

**Sexes equal in the eyes of God, but someone has to do the housework**

A husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the Church.

He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect and to lead his family.

A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.

She, being in the image of God, as is her husband thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and serve as his helper in managing their household and nurturing the next generation.

*Extract from the amendment*

# Pupils' labours lost in exam cock-up

Martin Wainwright

KING Lear had a word for the natural reaction of the English A-level students when they opened their exam papers - and found they had spent two years studying the wrong play.

"Howl, howl, howl," cried the king - whose descent into madness had been studied by the nine girls and two boys at Bradford grammar school in exchange for their parents' \$4,700 a year.

Cordelia, Goneril and the Fool were nowhere to be seen on the list of questions, which

covered the relatively unfamiliar worlds of *The Tempest*, *Henry IV* and *The Merchant of Venice* - plus *Othello*, which fortunately the sixth formers had studied.

"It became obvious very quickly after the exam had started that this group had expected King Lear and it wasn't there," said Stephen Davidson, headmaster of the 450-year-old independent school. "There was a general feeling of surprise."

Also of horror that a flagship school (old boys include Frederick Delius, Lord Harewood and David Hockney) could get lost in the complications

of A-level procedure. The problem, said Mr Davidson, accepting blame promptly on the school's behalf, was that Lear was on the modular A-level course (with exams in stages) but not the terminal one - Bradford's choice, where the ordeal comes at the end of the two-year course.

"The teacher concerned is devastated, although this is a departmental responsibility," said Mr Davidson. "He is a popular, committed and very highly valued member of staff."

Parents' anger and disappointment had been met with an apology and assurances

that Bradford grammar's 450-year-old motto Hoc Age (Do it) had been put into action promptly.

The Oxford and Cambridge exam board was rung within five minutes, with the exam put on hold, and "specific instructions" obtained on what the pupils should do. Othello questions were available in two sections and a third allowed comparison between any two Shakespearean plays.

A spokesman for the board said the students were given advice on question selection and reassurance that the strange circumstances would be taken into account.

Unless he does something seriously wild between now and Saturday it's a safe bet that when the Queen's 1998 Birthday Honours List is unveiled the Rt Hon Norman Lamont will finally get what he regards as his just desserts: a life peerage. Michael White on the Tory's favourite fall guy



G2 page 4

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Aston Villa star Stan Collymore, left, and, right, Ulrika Jonsson leaves home on Monday before her beating in a Paris bar

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN STRATTON

## Ulrika gives her footballer the boot

Helen Carter

ULRIKA Jonsson ended her relationship with Stan Collymore yesterday after the footballer had beaten her up in a Paris bar full of Scotland fans. As reporters and photographers camped outside Ms Jonsson's home in Cookham, Berkshire, her agent, Melanie Cantor, read a statement confirming her nine-month relationship with the Aston Villa player was over.

She said: "I would like everyone to know that I am fine and I confirm that my relationship with Stan Collymore is now over."

Ms Jonsson spent most of the day huddled up in her \$450,000 house but emerged in the morning to take her son, Cameron, out in her Saab

convertible. She walked to the car with a pronounced limp but refused to comment.

She left the house for a short while at lunch-time, and at 4pm, with face covered from photographers, she was driven through the village to television presenter Lorraine Kelly's house to watch Scotland's World Cup match against Brazil.

Ms Jonsson's decision to leave the £7 million Aston Villa star was welcomed by her former group, Linda Diggin, co-ordinator of Rights of Women, said: "Given her standing in society as a role model for women, I would hope it would encourage other women to leave abusive relationships."

"This case and the incident with Paul Gascoigne and his wife shows that domestic violence is endemic throughout the population, regardless of



status or class. Women's refuges are currently chock-a-block and underfunded."

Collymore, who was cleared in April of assaulting another former girlfriend, blamed his actions on jealousy, petulance and too much alcohol.

Trouble flared at the Auld Alliance Bar in Paris on Monday night when he asked 30-year-old Ms Jonsson to leave and she refused. He pushed her through a back room and on to the floor, kicking her head and face.

One Scotland fan was so en-

raged by Collymore's behaviour that he head-butted the 27-year-old player.

A Police Nationale spokesman in Paris yesterday confirmed that no charges had been brought and that they could investigate only if a complaint was made.

Collymore said: "I hope to be able to sort out this unidentified mess with some semblance of dignity — in private — and with the person who matters most of all, Ulrika."

He also apologised to the person who head-butted him

"for causing him to feel that he had to take such action."

Collymore's former girlfriend, Michelle Green, the mother of his two-year-old child, Thomas, said she was not surprised by the attack. She had claimed she had been assaulted by the footballer last Christmas after a row over access to their son.

At the time of the court case, Ms Jonsson was supportive of Collymore, saying: "For any dad, what Stan has gone through is a nightmare, but the case won't affect our

relationship — I'm looking forward to seeing him."

Although the player was assaulted by magistrates of assaulting 23-year-old Ms Green, from Cannock, Staffordshire, she said yesterday: "He has made a statement only because there are witnesses and he knows he can't get away with it."

"I was not believed when he hit me, because it was my word against his. I'm angry that no one believed me, but now, after this, perhaps they will."

## MPs scom 'weakness' of arts minister

Dan Galsister  
Arts Correspondent

SIX months ago its victim was the Royal Opera House, lashed by the colourful prose and waspish comments of its chairman. Now, the same fate has befallen Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, who emerged yesterday as the chief victim of the latest report from the cross-party parliamentary committee which shadows his department.

The department argued that the report concentrated on "glamorous and trivial matters" at the expense of more serious concerns such as tourism.

The report accused Mr Smith of not pulling his weight in Cabinet or with the Treasury. In a dig at his recently published and much criticised book *Creative Britain*, the report states: "Creative Britain provides an inadequate label for what should be the department's focus."

Noting the department's commitment to enhance its influence within Whitehall, the report states: "A commitment is not an achievement."

The Secretary of State should now make it his highest priority to advance the department both within Cabinet and by taking a much tougher attitude in his negotiations with the Treasury which has certainly not been achieved and may not even have been attempted.

The publication of the report immediately rekindled speculation about Mr Smith's future. Michael Fabricant, a Tory member of the committee, called on Mr Smith to resign. "I have never seen such a damning report before."

If Chris Smith has any dignity at all, he will go before he is pushed," he said.

But his demands may backfire. Mr Smith, who resigned from the committee on the report, immediately received the backing of Downing Street. A spokesman for Tony Blair said: "The Prime Minister has complete confidence in the Secretary of State. He is doing a fine job."

With the committee's Labour chairman, Gerald Kaufman, away, much of the attention fell on Mr Fabricant. It was suggested that he had leaked some of the report at the weekend, and that he had played a central part in altering the report at a final session last Thursday when the draft was substantially amended.

Labour MP Fiona MacTaggart, parliamentary private secretary to Mr Smith, played down the report's significance. "In key respects it is superficial and it fails to provide evidence," she said.

She pointed to the £7 million which the department won from the Treasury to preserve free access to national galleries and museums as proof that Mr Smith had made his case. "For a small department that's pretty good," she said.

The committee's main concern, that tourism was being ignored at the expense of more glamorous activities, was rejected by the Government and by Jeremy Loe, chief executive of the British Hospitality Association. "The tourism and hospitality industry has never received so much interest from government and we enjoy a very fruitful relationship with both ministers and officials, particularly at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport," he said.

## 'The problem with many football players is they hit out whenever their egos feel threatened'

Helen Carter

STAN Collymore is not alone in attacking his partner — he is following a pattern set by sportsmen including Paul Gascoigne and George Best.

Carole Senevit, a sports psychologist who works for the National Health Service and Durham University, said: "The problem with many football players is they are not very facile verbally and they hit out whenever their egos feel threatened."

"They get away with this behaviour because people excuse it by saying 'Ah, but he is a good footballer'."

Paul Gascoigne's bat-

tered wife, Sheryl, knows how Ulrika Jonsson feels. In 1996 she filed for divorce after being photographed with a bruised face and her arm in a sling. Gascoigne admitted striking her, but the couple are now back together.

Geoffrey Boycott, the former cricketer, was convicted in a French court after hitting his mistress Margaret Moore 20 times at a hotel in the South of France later the same year. Former Manchester United footballer George Best beat up his wife, Alex, on her birthday last year.

Football clubs refuse to talk about what provisions they have to help players deal with violent tenden-



Unsporting encounters... (from left) George Best, his wife Alex, Sheryl Gascoigne and her husband, Paul

cies. A spokesman for the Football Association said: "Clearly this problem is not one which is specifically football-related and it is a personal matter." Individual clubs similarly re-

fuse to talk about what measures they take to support players off the field. But a spokesman for Aston Villa Football Club, for whom Collymore plays, said they were very disappointed

about the incident and would be talking to him at the earliest opportunity.

Footballers have access to help if they want it, according to Brendan Batson, deputy chief executive of

the Professional Footballers' Association.

"Players are much more aware of the expertise on offer to them and they can come to us for help," he said.

## Tips inclusion in minimum wage could affect 450,000

Seumas Milne  
Labour Editor

TIPS, bonuses and commissions are all to be included in the calculation of the minimum wage, it emerged yesterday, as the TUC expressed alarm at reports that Gordon Brown is battling to cut the recommended youth rate of £3.20 and extend it to workers in their early 20s.

The incorporation of employer-collected tips and gratuities in the minimum wage, proposed in the Low Pay Commission report, could affect around 450,000 people working in the restaurant and hairdressing business.

The commission, which includes employer and trade

union representatives, unanimously recommended a standard legal minimum of £3.60 from next April, rising to £3.70 in June 2000, and a "development rate" of £3.20, rising to £3.30, for 18 to 20-year-olds and trainees for the first six months with an employer. Under-18s are to be excluded.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, yesterday wrote to the Prime Minister expressing the trade unions' concern at reports that "a minister wanted to water down the Low Pay Commission's recommendations, particularly for young people". The "TUC general council, yesterday called for full implementation of the report — despite its preference for a higher figure and no cut in rates for young workers."

## Market theory 'widened school table gap'

John Carvel

THE gap between the best and worst state secondary schools widened over recent years as Conservative ministers tried to create a competitive education market and put pressure on weaker establishments, the Office for Standards in Education said yesterday.

"The principle of parental choice has been frustrated because there have not been enough good schools and such schools have not been able, for the most part, to expand very greatly," it concluded.

Although standards rose overall, the better schools improved faster than their weaker rivals. In 1992 the performance gap between the top 10 per cent and bottom 10 per cent of secondaries was worth 30.4 points at GCSE — equivalent to nearly four additional passes per pupil at the top A\* grade. By 1996 that gap increased to 32 points.

One in 10 secondaries had significant weaknesses and one in 50 was failing to provide an acceptable quality of

education. At the start of the inspection cycle in 1993, behaviour was "very good" in two-thirds of secondaries. Four years later that had fallen to one-third in spite of a sharp increase in exclusions of troublesome pupils.

Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector, said the report was the most thorough investigation of secondary education anywhere in the world. The key to improvement was the quality of leadership. "Schools that have head teachers focusing on their schools' problems and moving them on are making progress."

The report said secondary schools changed over the four years to 1997 as ministers followed "a market theory", giving schools "the freedom and the motive to compete for pupils". They assumed that standards would be driven up as good schools expanded and unpopular ones would be forced to close.

"Parents do not in fact have the right to choose schools, merely express a preference. In some areas parents have been subject to some aggressive marketing, particularly where schools are competing

for 'better' pupils... It is frequently a source of local irritation that parents are drawn by glossy advertising, only to find that no place is available for their child."

Some secondaries became locked into a "vicious circle", obliged to admit difficult pupils excluded from other establishments because they could not attract enough pupils to fill their places.

Mr Woodhead would not comment on the Government's plans to issue guidance later this week to discourage schools from selecting the best pupils from a wide catchment area, at the expense of local children.

Stephen Byers, school standards minister, said: "One of the most worrying aspects of the report is that schools with comparable intakes perform very differently..."

John Sutton, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "Unless the Government is able to attract the best young graduates into the profession and persuade them to work in the more disadvantaged schools the gap is set to widen even further."

## Science shows manners maketh people prosper

Ruaridh Nicoll

GORDON Gecko would have been angry and confused — that is if the fictional broker's eighties ethic of greed had lasted long enough for him to hear about research proving kindness is a key to evolutionary progress.

Martin Nowak, a zoologist from Oxford University and Karl Sigmund, a mathematician from the University of Vienna argue in the latest issue of *Nature* that being mean leads to the evolutionary dead end while being nice helps boost chances of survival.

"Darwin's theory is based on the idea of competition which makes it hard to explain co-operation," said Professor Nowak. Until now this has been explained by "direct reciprocity" or as the professor put it: "If I buy you a pint of beer, I hope you would buy me a pint of beer back."

For direct reciprocity to work both sides have to be repeatedly in contact so one act of kindness can be repaid by another until the individuals form a "contract" based on helping each other.

But the academics found that random acts of kindness which makes it hard to expect return could also be beneficial. "We found it can work if you walk into a pub and offer drinks without a hope of being bought a beer."

To reach their conclusions the academics built a community on a computer. Some residents gave unconditionally and others took a more mi-

serly approach. Each individual lost points when they offered help and gained points when they received. While the "givers" initially lost, what they gained in goodwill from the community as a whole benefited them far more in the long run.

In an accompanying article, ecologist Régis Ferrière, from the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, takes the concept further by suggesting that the professors' "indirect reciprocity" could be relevant to animal and plant communities.

The Arabian babbar was a gregarious bird that seemed "to enjoy helping other babblers" and competed for the status of donor, he said.

Prof Nowak said he believes human society is based on the ability to co-operate. Most is carried out with an eye on its payoff. A classic model is the Prisoner's Dilemma game which involves two suspects, imprisoned separately, who can either keep silent (to co-operate with each other) or betray by defecting.

If both prisoners co-operate then they get a lighter sentence but by defecting one could do better than the other. If played once, defection seems the best strategy but if the same opponents play repeatedly either player can return the co-player's help or punish their defection.

Whether Mother Teresa was motivated in her ministries by her desire to be well liked is still a subject of hot debate. "Our model doesn't take account of human motivation," said Prof Nowak.



Polite society... two gentlemen meet and doff their hats. The inferior one bows as well

ILLUSTRATION: MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

## Pay rise plea to head off teacher shortage

John Carvel

CHRIS Woodhead, the chief inspector of schools and leading critic of incompetent teachers, yesterday intervened in the Whitehall spending battle with a plea to improve the profession's pay to stop a recruitment crisis blighting classroom performance.

"If the Prime Minister can achieve his ambition to move more money into education,

there are two areas where I would see most need for investment — teachers' salaries and capital investment to improve school buildings," he said as the Treasury was completing its comprehensive review of Whitehall spending.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, has been bidding for an extra £8 billion over three years for schools, but his priorities were thought to be smaller classes and better in-

service training rather than a hike in salaries.

In a lecture six weeks ago to the right-wing think tank Politeia, Mr Woodhead said there was "no inspection evidence to suggest schools as a whole are underfunded to do the job."

But yesterday he drew attention to a potential recruitment crisis, caused by a 15 per cent fall in applications for teacher training courses this year as graduates seek other employment opportunities.

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AT RISK: A prostitute in Hamburg. Britain based its case on a grant for work with prostitutes. PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN WEAVER



AT RISK: Landmine clearance. A Cambodian expert uncovers a Soviet-made PMN-2 anti-personnel mine. The European Commission has suspended its £5 million grant to the clearance campaign. PHOTOGRAPH: NIG DUNLOP



AT RISK: Support for women's projects. Children play safely in a British women's refuge. PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN NISMAN

# Europe loses its friendly face

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE fateful British court case which plunged Europe into chaos last night began with prostitutes in Vienna and Bilbao at the height of the Conservative government's Euro-sceptic period.

A £200,000 grant from the European Union social fund to rehabilitate the socially excluded was awarded by the European Commission to organisations in the Spanish and Austrian cities to help redeem the women. Britain, under John Major, blocked the payment and then took a case to the European Court of Justice questioning the commission's right to make such discretionary grants.

To the surprise of many in the commission, the Blair government decided to continue the case, in part because it was supported by Germany and Denmark as a means of establishing clear rules about authorised spending.

"This is not about the lack of British government priorities about the social exclusion budget, which we strongly support. But taxpayer-



**'The real problem is institutional. The legislative authority rests in the Council of Ministers, but the budgetary authority is in the European Parliament. It is a typical problem of the EU system'**

Erkki Liikanen

Last night Oxfam was told to expect "indefinite delays" in already approved projects to help impoverished fishing villages in the Philippines and to mediate in tribal wars between farmers and nomads in Mali.

"Unless this crisis is resolved quickly, our British government's reputation for international development could be very seriously undermined," said Oxfam's policy director, Phil Blumer, who saw 18 months of preparatory work and £2.5 millions in immediate aid come to a halt.

The EU's support for women's projects and its Aids health campaign in the Third World will also be affected, along with the budget for anti-racism programmes in Europe, even though this will be authorised by the Amsterdam treaty once it is fully ratified by member states.

Social policy conferences which bring people from all over Europe to Brussels were placed on hold. Aids projects were told the money had run out. Groups representing Europe's 30 million disabled people and its 60 million pensioners were told to expect instant cuts, with no guarantee that their grants would be resumed in the future.

The legal decision was delivered three weeks ago, but until the EU budget commissioner, Erkki Liikanen of Finland, began reading the small print the implications did not sink in.

The social affairs commissioner, Padraig Flynn, warned that the EU as a whole could face a serious political crisis, saying the cuts amounted to "scorched earth" for that part of the EU budget closest to the average citizen — and that is the

theme Tony Blair wants to promote at the Cardiff summit.

At first the commissioners assumed that their departmental budgets would be little affected. Then the consumer affairs commissioner, Emma Bonino, realised that the entire budget for her food and meat and imports inspection service was at risk. The science and training commissioner, Edith Cresson, realised that she was holding a conference later this week with the European Voluntary Service, whose entire £17 million budget was being suspended.

Mr Flynn failed to persuade his fellow commissioners yesterday that they should challenge the court ruling, or at least the very strict interpretation placed on it by the EU's legal service.

They should, he argued, make common cause with the European Parliament — whose budgetary prerogatives were being undermined — and call on ministers to work out an immediate solution.

Most dramatic of all was the commission's realisation that its top officials, the directors-general and divisional chiefs earning more than

**'This is a mortal challenge to the human face of Europe that we keep talking about. This is some of the most valuable work we do. And we could be looking at cuts twice or three times higher'**

Padraig Flynn

£100,000 a year, could be held personally responsible for all the questionable payments they had authorised.

"The computers have been turned off, nobody wants to take this risk any more," a senior commission source said last night as the word — and the panic — spread.

As the scale of the required cuts became clear and the potential for British embarrassment on the eve of the summit, commission officials scurried to repair the damage and find some way with the European Parliament to restore the funding.



"We are working now with MEPs to find a way out," said Nicola Bedington, who runs the European Forum for the Disabled.

"But this is not just a short-term problem of our immediate budgets. In the longer term this jeopardises the ability of the disabled to be active at the European level, to put our case to Brussels and the parliament on something where Europe can really make a difference to people."

All the disputed spending areas have been approved by MEPs, but Britain argued before the European Court that

this was not enough, and that the commission's discretionary spending had to be controlled.

A commission spokesman said yesterday: "The Court of Justice has now clarified the legal requirements for the execution of the EU budget. The commission has therefore launched a review of a number of budget lines without a clear basis, and decided to suspend their execution temporarily."

The court ruled that without a clear legal base in the budget approved by the Council of Ministers and parliament, money could be spent only on "non-significant EU actions".

On the advice of its legal officers, the commission assumes that this means its own information programmes, such as explaining the single currency, its pilot and experimental projects, and preparations for new social programmes.

"The real problem is institutional," Mr Liikanen said. "The legislative authority rests in the Council of Ministers, but the budgetary authority is in the European Parliament. It is a typical problem of the EU system."

## Rebels 'gutted Kosovo homes'

Jonathan Steele in Decan

THE massive destruction of houses in western Kosovo over the past two weeks, which has turned almost 100,000 people into refugees, was partly caused by Albanian terrorists, according to the commander of the Serbian police operation in the area.

Major-General Sreten Lukic said they "activated" previously installed mines and set fires during their withdrawal in order to destroy the evidence of their terrorism.

If any buildings were damaged by the Serbian police, "this was only because terrorists were firing from them and the police had to return fire", he told journalists inspecting the ruins of several villages yesterday.

Gen Lukic was giving the first official version of the recent fighting by Serbian authorities on the spot in the west of Kosovo, the province largely peopled by ethnic Albanians but lying inside the remnants of the former Yugoslavia, which is dominated by Serbia.

The guided tour, under escort from Pristina, followed a

Ministers urged to impose deadline on Belgrade.

SENIOR diplomats of the international contact group on former Yugoslavia, via yesterday proposed giving President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia a deadline to end violence in the province of Kosovo or face measures that could include military action.

The French foreign minister said the diplomats from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia had agreed on a package of measures to be put to Mr Milosevic and leaders of the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo to end the violence and a resume dialogue.

The proposal, drawn up at a meeting in Paris, is to be put to the foreign ministers of the contact group when they meet in London tomorrow. Setting a deadline would be up to them.

Adding to the pressure, President Clinton implemented a freeze on Serbian holdings in the United States. — Reuters.

Similar visit by diplomats on Sunday, David Gajic, a senior police official in plain clothes who accompanied the general, said "terrorists" from the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) had fortified houses along the road and set up sniper positions.

They were attempting to seize control of Decan — a town whose population is 98 per cent Albanian — in order to cut communications on the main north-south road. They could then have created a corridor for supplies of arms and men from the Albanian border a few miles to the west.

In Prilep, about three miles south of Decan, the general went 50 yards up a side road

and pointed out some primitive trenches which he said had been built by the UCK. The stench of rotting flesh rose from a small bunker lined with sandbags which had been smashed in. This, too, he said was once an UCK fortification. The initials UCK were daubed on the walls of nearby buildings.

Much of Prilep was in ruins, but the general repeatedly evaded the issue of whether the police had used excessive force with the aim of forcing people to leave.

In Decan, he pointed to two blocks of flats: "You see those buildings which are absolutely intact? That is because no one fired at us from there."

Gen Lukic said the police had no tanks. An hour later at the side of the road we saw a Soviet T-34 tank marked "Militia".

Mr Gajic, for his part, said "a large number of foreign mercenaries has been registered by the Serbian authorities, plus 50 mujahedins". It was unclear what "registered" meant: he admitted that no such people had been detained or found dead by the Serbian authorities.

Repeatedly challenged about foreign mercenaries, Mr Gajic said, "I hope you don't have any illusions about our security services not knowing the number of terrorists in any village."

Gen Lukic said the aim of the two-week operation in the

west was to make the road free for people to use. He denied the aim was ethnic cleansing.

Asked why there were no civilians in sight, except for a few Serbs in parts of Decan, he said the "terrorists" moved civilians out before launching attacks.

The Serbian government, he said, had invited ethnic Albanians to return now that the road was open — though away from the artery, "terrorist activities are continuing. They're just withdrawn a little." And there had been "an increase in groups and numbers".

So had the police operation been a success? "The operation was successful," Gen Lukic said. "I speak from the point of view of the police who are responsible for creating the conditions for traffic to flow normally."

As we continued south, the only living people we saw were groups of police at sandbagged positions under the trees.

A few untended horses and cows wandered around. Not one Albanian civilian could be seen enjoying the newly restored freedom of movement.

### News in brief

#### Belarus stays eviction as envoys cause stink

THE former Soviet republic of Belarus was brought back from the edge of international isolation yesterday when Western ambassadors suspended a mass walkout threatened in response to its interference with diplomatic levatories, *Tom Whitehouse in Moscow writes.*

#### Aid workers shot in Sudan

Three Sudanese relief workers employed by the United Nations World Food Programme and the Sudanese Red Crescent were killed on Tuesday in central Sudan, a UN official said. — AP.

#### Sri Lankan toll

Fighting between Sri Lankan forces and Tamil rebels for control of a highway has killed 43 people since May 28, the defence minister, Anuruddha Ratwatte, said. — AP.

#### Guinea ceasefire

Troops loyal to Guinea-Bissau's President Joao Bernardo Vieira and rebels fighting to overthrow him agreed to a ceasefire to allow time for mediation. — Reuters.

The government's plan to evict 22 ambassadors from their official residences to carry out "urgent plumbing repairs" caused the diplomatic stink. Now President Alexander Lukashenko has extended the eviction deadline to next Wednesday.

The ambassadors live in a compound called Drozdzy, where Mr Lukashenko also has a flat. The government has refused to allow the diplomats to carry out their own repairs.

The diplomats are more concerned about the danger to their countries' sovereignty and security.

#### Prayers for tsar

The patriarch of Russia's Orthodox Church, Alexei II, called on Christians to pray for the last tsar, whose remains will be buried in July, writes *Tom Whitehouse in Moscow.* But he said he would not attend the service.

#### Killer sentenced

A Siberian army deserter sentenced to death for raping, robbing and stabbing to death 19 people. — AP.

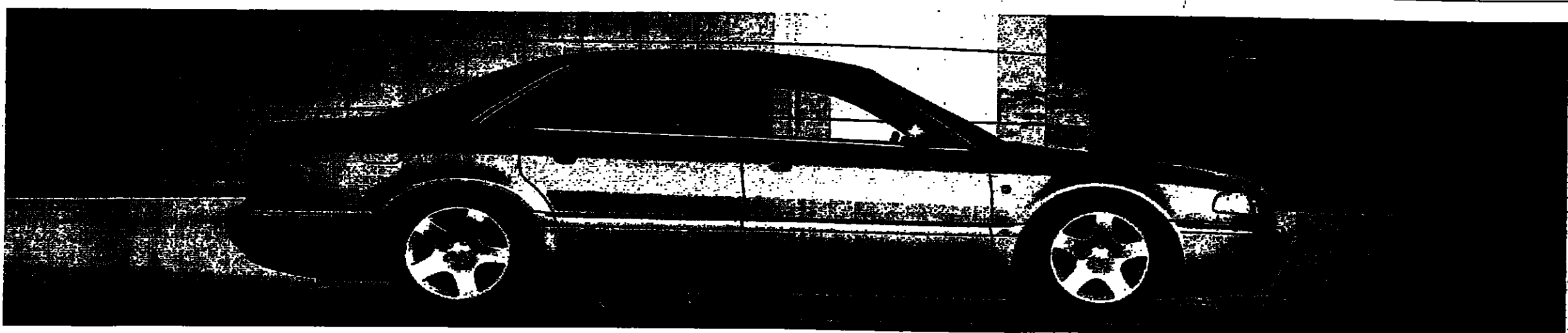
#### Boost for oldies

A 70-year-old Wall Street millionaire donated \$1 million (€225,000) to buy Viagra for other ageing men who cannot afford it. "It's something that will give a lot of pleasure to a lot of people," Alan Greenberg said. — *New York Times.*

#### Air France pilots end pay strike

AIR FRANCE, the official A World Cup airline, reached a surprise agreement with its striking pilots just hours before the opening match yesterday, ending a 10-day dispute that severely disrupted travel plans for thousands of football fans, writes *Jon Henley in Paris.*

Under the deal, Air France will drop plans for a two-tier pay scale which would have put new pilots on a permanently lower salary. But all pilots will have to take a pay cut in return for share options. Those who refuse the options will have their pay frozen for seven years.



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سكيا من الامم



# Fear among reviled believers breeds Christian soldiers

Persecution is leading even some churchmen to call Pakistan's 'outcasts' to arms. Suzanne Goldenberg reports from Faisalabad



Ziaul Qasimi, leader of one of the hardline Muslim groups bent on subjugating non-believers

PHOTOGRAPH: SUZANNE GOLDENBERG



Protesting students drive through Dili yesterday demanding autonomy for East Timor

PHOTOGRAPH: CHARLES DHARAPAK

## Habibie's troubles multiply

John Aglionby in Jakarta

**T**HOUSANDS of East Timorese protested yesterday against Indonesian President B.J. Habibie's latest plan for the territory, while dozens of demonstrations occurred across Indonesia against continuing corruption and the government's failure to halt the economy's collapse.

In the capital Jakarta hundreds of armed troops were on the streets as thousands demonstrated throughout the city after the rupiah currency yesterday hit a four-month low of 13,000 to the United States dollar, a depreciation of 80 per cent since the economic crisis began last July.

In East Timor's capital Dili, meanwhile, more than 3,000 people gathered at the university to reject the effectively meaningless "special status" Mr Habibie indicated on Tuesday he was considering for the former Portuguese colony, invaded by Indonesia in 1975.

In the biggest protest against Jakarta's rule in 18 months, people demanded a ballot on independence, sang nationalist songs and shouted anti-Indonesian slogans.

"Special status means nothing, we will still be ruled by Jakarta," one protester said. "What we want is the right to determine our own future and not be dictated to any more."

Three Indonesian provinces have special status: it means they are allowed to apply traditional laws in addition to existing national laws, but they have no real autonomy.

Mr Habibie also announced the release of 15 East Timorese prisoners yesterday, eight imprisoned for political offences and seven on criminal charges.

Not included was the separatist leader, Jose Gusmano, serving 20 years.

On Tuesday, the foreign minister, Ali Alatas, reiterated that Mr Gusmano would be released only as part of a "final settlement" of the East Timor issue, when the United Nations agreed to recognise Indonesian

sovereignty of the territory. In Jakarta, the largest protest was by 1,000 employees of the national airline, Garuda Indonesia, who demanded an overhaul of the firm that is \$120 million in debt. Across Freedom Square from the presidential palace, pilots, cabin crew and other staff demanded the termination of contracts linked to members of the Suharto family.

At the manpower ministry, hundreds of protesters demanded an investigation into corruption within the state pension fund company.

Towns across the country also witnessed rallies by people frustrated at rising prices and unemployment. However, the country's second city, Surabaya, was quiet after two days of clashes between police and tens of thousands of low-paid factory workers seeking better working conditions.

Sporadic social unrest is beginning again after two weeks of relative calm following Mr Suharto's resignation on May 21. In the central Java town of Tegal, hundreds of people rioted on Tuesday, stoning banks, offices and car showrooms.

Everyone agrees a recovery is dependent on the International Monetary Fund disbursing its second tranche of a \$26 billion bailout in return for "weeping" economic reforms. But the IMF's Asia-Pacific director, Hubert Neiss, arrived in Jakarta yesterday and said any release of the funds was weeks away.

"The IMF's money is only the start of a very long process," a foreign businessman warned. "This country needs foreign investment desperately, but I would not recommend it until there is a new government in place that is elected democratically."

Mr Habibie has scheduled elections for next May at the earliest. "That is 11 months away," the businessman said. "Look what has happened in the last 11 months. It is clear the situation here is going to get much, much worse, both economically and socially, before it gets better."

**L**OVE thine enemy, bless them that curse you. But not, apparently, in Pakistan where even Christian bishops now believe the time has come to take up the sword against the tormentors of their people, and raise a Christian army.

"On one side, we are preaching Jesus is the prince of peace, and if someone strikes you, turn the other cheek," said the Church of Pakistan Bishop of Lahore, Alexander John Malik.

"On the other side, the side of security and protection, we have to do something," he sighed. "If need be, we might have to think about arming ourselves."

Bishop Malik is not alone in his despair. The Christians of Pakistan profess to have lost all faith in a government that seems disinclined to shield them from armed Muslim extremist groups, or to enact legal reforms that would protect them from people exploiting Pakistan's blasphemy law, often for petty gain.

This law, which includes a mandatory death sentence for those convicted of slurs against the prophet Mohammed or the Koran, has reduced even peace-loving believers to desperation, including, last month, the Catholic bishop of Faisalabad, John Joseph.

On May 6, Joseph, aged 56, was shot in the chest by a Christian labourer for blasphemy. Two more men have been jailed for blasphemy since the suicide.

Islam preaches respect for *ahl-i-kitaab* — "people of the book", which includes Christians. But in Pakistan, Christians are despised as the offspring of Dalits, formerly the "untouchables" of Hinduism —

although the practice of caste is forbidden by Islam. "I travelled all over the world and Christian people everywhere are beautiful except here in Pakistan where they are dark and ugly," says Ziaul Qasimi, a leader of the Sipah-i-Sahiba-i-Pakistan (Army of the Companions of the Prophet), a Sunni extremist group which is the model for Bishop Malik's proposed Christian fighting force.

But Joseph's death has transformed a community, previously rendered docile by its size — less than 2 per cent of the population — and its subjugation. Tens of thousands of mourners followed the bishop's body to his grave, grief turning to rage after police opened fire on mourners stoning cars.

Three weeks later, in the sprawl of mud huts known locally as Bagawal — and known officially as Village 197 — his position on the grid of canals that were the most precious gift of the Raj to Punjab — an illiterate Christian welder became the blasphemy law's next victim.

Shafiq Masih — the surname common among Pakistani Christians, means messiah — shared a shop in Bagawal with two Muslim tradesmen. After

constant squabbles, says his mother, Shafiq balked last month over an unfair division of their joint electricity bill. The three men were close to blows when the muzzin (prayer-caller) of the village mosque arrived. The welder refused to wait on him.

"The muzzin said, 'I will teach you Christians not to get into a showdown with us Muslims'," recalls a neighbour, Miraj Masih. The three men beat Shafiq, and took Shafiq to his home. The muzzin filed a complaint of blasphemy, and Shafiq was jailed.

Miraj Masih says the villagers were hoping the landlord would intervene with the police. "But the landlord is afraid that if he does that, people will come to him and say: 'Oh, what kind of a Muslim are you?'"

Human rights activists and church workers say the crime of blasphemy is ripe for misuse because it is so loosely defined. Introduced under military rule, when such legal niceties as burial of proof were overruled, the law has become an instrument to cheat a neighbour, remove a rival from a coveted job, or in the case of Shafiq Masih,

settle a dispute over an electricity bill. Within the last nine years, 30 people have been jailed on blasphemy charges — 19 of them since 1996, and seven last year alone. Ranjha Masih was number 23, fodder for a police force itching to teach the Christian mourners a lesson after the violence of the bishop's funeral.

A retired office cleaner in his 60s, Ranjha was on the way home from the protest with his youngest son, Miraj, aged 14, when he ran into a gang from the Sipah-i-Sahiba-i-Pakistan. Ranjha was badly beaten.

When the police arrived they arrested him for blasphemy, and accused him of stoning a signboard inscribed with the kalima, the Muslim profession of faith, that had been damaged in the protest.

That night Ranjha's wife, Rashida, heard the call from the loudspeaker of the local mosque to punish the sinner. "We locked the house and left. We had only the clothes we were wearing." The mob arrived a day later, snapping the bamboo cross Ranjha had rigged from a telephone wire, and breaking the retaining wall of the compound.

In the last month, his extended family of 12 have been fugitives, dangerous guests even in the homes of relatives who fear their discovery could bring down the wrath of Muslim extremist organisations.

Ranjha's people do not know where he is held. The police say this is for his own safety; at least two Christians accused of blasphemy have been murdered in custody.

Church workers are hoping that the international furor created over the bishop's death may persuade the authorities to release Shafiq and Ranjha quietly.

But even if the men are freed — by public pressure or an eventual acquittal — it is unlikely this will happen soon, or that they can return to their old lives. In towns like Faisalabad, lawyers are reluctant to take on blasphemy cases for fear of becoming outcasts.

Judges, too, hesitate, especially since last year's murder of a Lahore justice who freed two Christians on appeal. Muslim extremists are entirely unforgiving of blasphemy cases, will harass how dubious — and though the extremists, like the Christians, are a minority, they are armed and

powerful. "The intolerance is growing each year and the government is doing nothing to promote tolerance," said Father Bonnie Mendez, a senior priest in the Faisalabad diocese, and a member of the joint church justice and peace commission.

"Whether we like it or not, violence is coming. So what do we do? I believe if you use arms then it creates a scar. But I don't think many people think like me."

So seriously did the people of Faisalabad view bishop Alexander John Malik's call to arms — a Sipah-i-Sahiba (Christian army) — that earlier this month they set up a peace council of Muslims and Christians. The council, however, is intended only to review evidence of blasphemy cases, not to abolish them, and includes Muslim extremists who show little sympathy for the Christians.

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## Drugs war just 'an exercise in futility'

Mark Tran in New York

**O**NE of the stranger moments of yesterday's United Nations drug summit came as it ended with the adoption of an ambitious plan to slash the supply and demand of illegal drugs.

"Fraternising with the growers of coca, poppy and marijuana in Colombia," declared Omayra Morales, a member of the Andean council of coca leaf producers, outside the general assembly, while inside presidents, prime ministers and other dignitaries spoke of the need

for urgent action. Mrs Morales portrayed the war against drugs as an exercise in futility. Four years ago, she said, the Colombian government said it would end coca cultivation within two years. Coca was then being grown on 100,000 acres. Today's figure was 250,000 acres.

Fumigation of coca fields, Mrs Morales said, had only forced growers deeper into the Amazon. "There have been many protests and demonstrations," she said. "In response, there has been a military offensive against leaders of the protests."

Mrs Morales provided a human reminder that the war against drugs is not going well. Since 1961, UN drug control strategies have put eradication of illegal opium at centre stage. Yet according to the Lindesmith Centre, an institute backed by the finance George Soros, opium production is rising sharply. Coca cultivation has doubled since 1985, according to UN figures, and drug prices are falling.

UN approach warn that eradication efforts will lead to greater deforestation without reducing supply. Colette Youngers of the Washington Office on Latin America said the United States was "addicted to failed policies". The non-governmental organisation says the increas-

ing use of the military in the war against drugs will undermine democratic rule in Latin America and lead to human rights abuses.

Some UN officials yesterday criticised efforts to stamp out drug supply. "Such policies have had no effect on supply, and crop substitution does not work without the development of markets and infrastructure like transportation," said one. A European diplomat was more scathing: "What a farce, I've never heard such platitudes."

But others pointed to the value of discussing key issues such as money laundering. Although the summit ended with the adoption of an ambi-

tious plan to cut supply and demand, it remains to be seen whether countries will come up with the hard cash to fund the proposal. It was advanced by Pino Arlacchi, former UN drug control chief and UN International Drug Control Programme, who puts the cost of the plan at between \$2.5 billion and \$3 billion during the next 10 years. That is well above current funding levels," his programme received \$100 million for 1998-99.

The proposal calls for tighter international controls on chemicals that go into making the finished product, and better tracking of money laundering.

He also wants to offer farmers alternative development schemes so they can substitute other crops, such as rice and coffee, for drug plants.

President Bill Clinton, who said people must "wage this fight around the world and around the kitchen table", did not put any more money on the table for the programme. General Barry McCaffrey, the US drug czar, was lukewarm about the Arlacchi plan, saying it was too soon to talk about money.

Washington will almost certainly refuse to give money to at least two opium-growing countries, Burma and Afghanistan, because of their repressive regimes.

## Soros and friends call for reform of harmful policies

Christopher Wren in New York

**A**DRUG reform institute financed by the billionaire George Soros has amassed signatures of hundreds of prominent people throughout the world to a letter that says the global war against drugs is causing more harm than drug abuse itself.

The petitioners include the former United Nations secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuellar, the former United States secretary of state George Shultz, the Costa Rican Nobel peace laureate Oscar Arias, the former CBS television anchorman Walter Cronkite

and the South African human rights activist Helen Suzman.

Mrs Soros has spent millions of dollars trying to change the way Americans think about drugs. He has promoted medicinal use of marijuana and financed programmes that distribute clean needles to people who inject drugs.

The letter, drafted by the Lindesmith Centre in New York, was addressed to UN secretary-general Kofi Annan. It says: "Persisting in our current policies will only result in more abuse, more empowerment of drug markets and criminals and more disease and suffering."

The letter, which was signed by about 600 people,

proposes no clear alternatives beyond asking Mr Annan to stimulate "a frank and honest evaluation of global drug control efforts". It hopes it will foster an open discussion, which is very difficult," Mr Soros said. "By having so many distinguished people sign on, it should make people want to discuss whether our policies are counterproductive or not."

Ethan Nadleemann, the Lindesmith president, said: "This was my initiative. George agreed to help."

Washington's director of national drug policy, General Barry McCaffrey, called the letter "a 1950s perception of the fight against drugs." — New York Times.

## Former Argentinian dictator arrested for child kidnapping

Sebastian Rotella in Buenos Aires

**A**RGENINA'S former dictator, Jorge Rafael Videla, is under arrest as part of an investigation into one of the most brutal crimes of the 1970s military regime: the systematic kidnapping of children.

Federal police arrested Mr Videla, aged 72, at his suburban apartment on Tuesday, on orders of a judge investigating a case brought by relatives of "disappeared" children, authorities said.

Roberto Marquesevich, the federal judge, was reported to have ordered the arrest based on five cases in which Mr Videla is accused of covering up the identities of abducted



Jorge Rafael Videla: babies disappeared under junta

children who were given to military families. "Videla participated directly in all this horror, from the planning to the training of the torturers," said Hebe de Bonafin of the Mothers of the Plaza

De Mayo, a human-rights group formed by the mothers of victims.

Mr Videla and other former military leaders have walked the streets freely since 1980, when President Carlos Menem pardoned them. Mr Videla, the former army commander who toppled President Isabel Peron in a 1976 coup, had been sentenced to life imprisonment in 1985 for his role in the "Dirty War" against guerrillas and suspected leftwingers.

But the amnesty does not cover the dictatorship's practice of abducting children. In some cases, children were taken from families in raids by security forces. In others, babies born in concentration camps to imprisoned mothers were forcibly taken away. — Los Angeles Times.

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# Comment

## Diary

Matthew Norman

I AM baffled by the double standards shown towards the press by Sir Nicholas Lloyd. On the one hand, Nick has carved a moment in his frantic diary to call the London Evening Standard, to deny Lord Archer's claim there on Tuesday that it was he (Nick), and not the sweet-smelling Mary, who suggested the purchase of those Anglia shares; on the other, he has failed to return our call regarding Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber, whose chief toilet spokesman he is. Never mind. Daniel at Sir Nick's PR firm saw Andrew on Monday night, and says he is in "tip-top condition". With the tropical amoeba at bay, and the bladder performing well, what, then, can explain Lord Andrew's latest eccentricity? A newspaper reveals that he has turned down a £10,000 council grant to repair a church in the grounds of his Sydmon home, because taking the money would oblige him to allow access to the public. And, as you will recall, is patron of the Open Church Society.

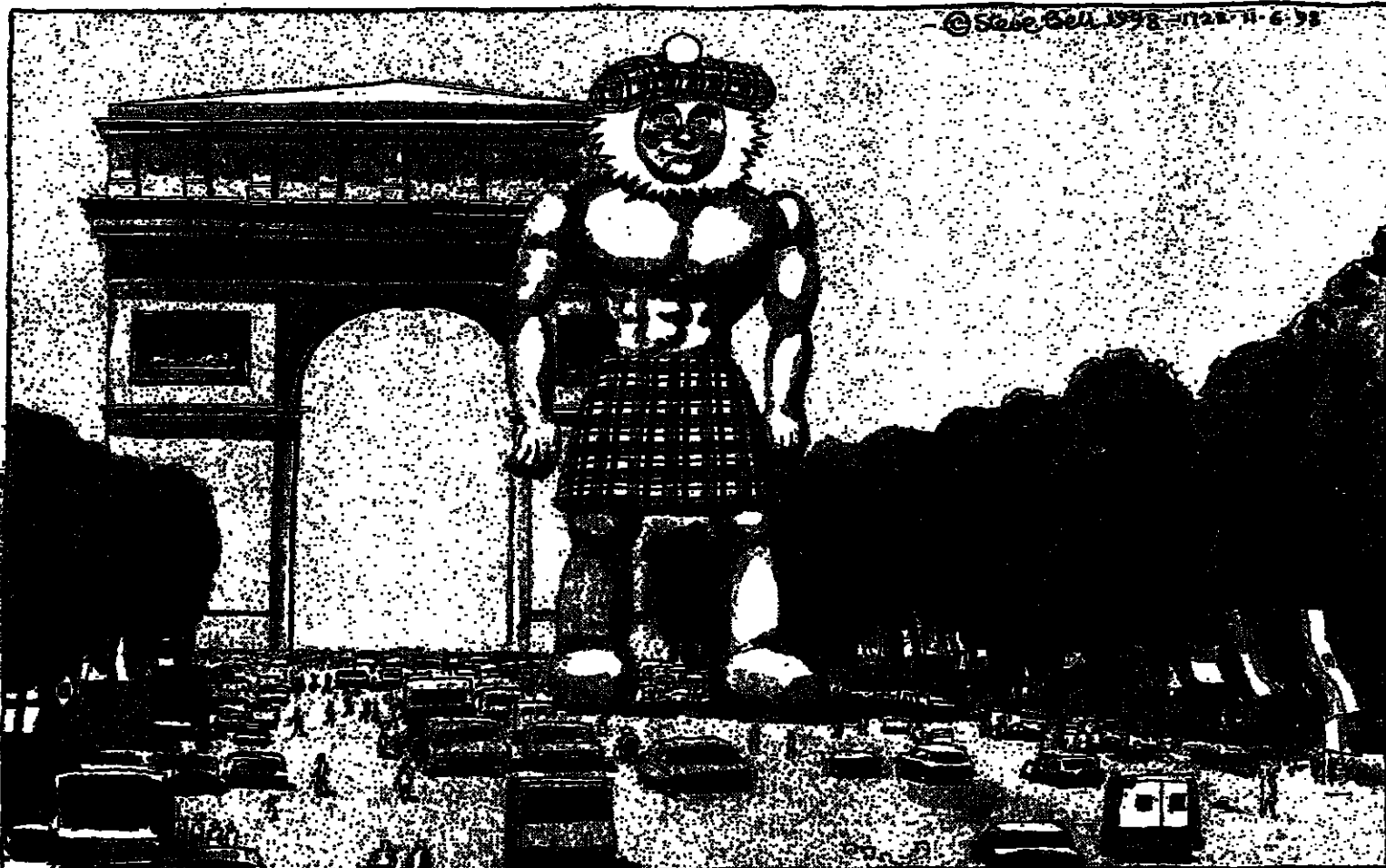
WITH the axing of Does He Take Sugar?, disability issues on Radio 4 are now covered by You And Yours, and last week Bert Massey from the pressure group Radar went to Broadcasting House to discuss wheelchair access on the railways. When Mr Massey reached the station, he discovered that there was no wheelchair access, and had to be lifted in by porters. That studio has now been booked for the whole series. Hats off.

THE summer-long competition to find the most nauseatingly sympathetic New Labour MP makes a slow start, so I must remind you that, for once, the prize is worth winning. The person who nominates the champion crawler (by pointing out repulsive toadying in the Commons, on TV or radio, in a local newspaper column, or anywhere else) will receive a caricature of that MP — in some position of stomach-churning proximity to Mr Tony Blair — drawn by the great Steve Bell. Runners up get the usual, intensely mediocre champagne.

SENSATIONAL news in the Times, where it is scandalous to report that Dolly Draper is writing a novel about a newspaper diarist! Indignant at the Times's suggestion that the novel will give him "something to do" ("They must be being ironic. I've always got at least five things to do"), Dolly explains that the book will concern the intertwined lives of four London characters — a New Labour spin doctor, a stand-up comic, a PR man and a diarist. But on whom will the latter be modelled? Mr Dolly, more you David Rennie type," he says, referring to the elegant young man who used to do the Telegraph's Peterborough column. "Not someone who does the serious stuff, like you and I." Publication, says Dolly, will be next spring. The Booker panel awaits.

DOLLY'S spin doctor, meanwhile, will be modelled on Tim Allan, for whose recently vacated post as Alastair Campbell's number two I myself applied. For reasons yet to be explained, that job has gone elsewhere. Lance Price, a political correspondent at the BBC, has been appointed. He has already got off to a cracking start, by failing to return our calls. We look forward to him not returning countless more in the months and years ahead.

WHILE every other drinking place in Britain installs giant screens for the football, a lone voice is heard. The London club Teatro (where, according to Michael Winner, Mandy Patinkin recently came close to peeing in a sink) has declared itself "a World Cup Free Zone. I hope you will think of Teatro as a haven away from the throng," writes the membership secretary. What an uncouth game football is, and fit only for ruffians. Still, it does pay well. One player, Lee Chapman, made so much out of it that he was recently able to open a smart London club. Teatro, I think it's called.



## Now Europe seems part of Britain, so watch out for Blair's next move

Hugo Young



A MONTH ago, Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac undertook a jolly project that would embarrass Tony Blair. They decided to write him a letter, setting out their view of the future of Europe. Bruised by their terrible row over the presidency of the European Central Bank, they proposed a kiss-and-make-up initiative which would show how much they agreed about, as well as demonstrating which countries were still in charge of the Union.

Mr Blair was duly embarrassed. In fact, he grew as near as he ever gets to being furious. For the letter took many weeks to arrive, and by its very absence — yet also the certain knowledge that it was being composed — it removed from Blair the initiative that normally belongs to the President of the EU to settle the text and agenda for the next summit meeting. The most important part of the Cardiff summit on Monday will now take place on a Kohl-Chirac and not a Blair text. This has required a willingness to overlook what the normal rules would define as humiliation, and seen in Britain's Euro-diplomacy for many years. There have been other proofs of modesty. From being "the leader of Europe, then a" leader of Europe, Mr Blair's preferred self-description these days is as "leader of European ideas". He's prepared to say quite openly that the last Euro-summit, when he was supposed to preside over a smooth inauguration of EMU, was "a short-term mess". The triumphalist lecturing mode of his early continental performances is heard no more. In short, Blair has acquired a new maturity, which enables him, as neither Mrs Thatcher nor John Major

could ever contemplate, to abandon the foot-stamping fiction of dominance. Allowing the floor to Kohl and Chirac, figures on the wane, matters less than preparing for the social democratic Europe of Lionel Jospin and Gerhard Schröder, in which the British social democrat is seeking to forestall his own possible eclipse. When EMU happens, the Jospin-Schröder axis will probably be in charge. Blair's people are concerned about what this will mean. For the leader was also honest about admitting that exclusion from EMU gave Britain, as he said, "less influence". He's therefore in search of an alternative project to keep Britain at the front of the game, and has decided that political reform — making "Europe" less Brussels-based and more accountable to the people — should be his mission. Since this is what the two old scene-stealers appear to be talking about as well, Blair stifles his indignation at their games, knowing that his agenda looks like becoming the continent's as well.

Fumblingly, this has been apparent for some time. Inchoate worries about the distance of the people from "Europe" surfaced at many meetings Blair has attended with other leaders. In his dreams, though, he imagines himself taking on, for the very first time, something of the role that the original Five — the Common Market, minus France — always wanted Britain to accept, but which her stance of perpetual enmity, whether in or out of "Europe", made impossible: the bestowing on the Community of her political wisdom, and her unique experience in the preservation of parliamentary democracy. If political reform now begins, it won't be like

that. Seen from Bonn or Rome, the British model is no longer as special as it was. But the pursuit of a Europe that the people feel in touch with, and also in command of, will begin in earnest at Cardiff.

The ideas the Brits bring to it vary in their clarity. The firmest is for a hardening-up of subsidiarity. This is what Kohl and Chirac were talking about as well, with their seldom-heard critique of the excesses of Brussels. Blair is not in favour of a legal structure, forcing the judges to decree what should go to the nations and what should stay with Brussels. He argues for a pragmatic approach towards a firm code of conduct and a thorough review of the immense Euro-rule book.

More lightly sketched is what might be done to ensure that elected politicians exert serious control over the bureaucrats. One has recently floated about is Michael Heseltine's old notion of a second chamber of the European Parliament, consisting of representatives from national legislatures, which would have a scrutinising role. More speculative is a scheme for a political directorate, consisting of each member-state's European minister, meeting perhaps fortnightly to take command over the EU agenda.

THESE are embryonic propositions. Each would fire up a lot of static. Already there's a big alert out, especially from the smaller member-states, against Cardiff becoming an occasion for bashing the Commission, the temple not only of bureaucratic power in aid of the European idea, but also of small-state influence, as Belgium, Luxembourg and others see it, against the mighty Germans, French and British.

Any of these initiatives would constitute an adventurous change, fit for lengthy deliberation. Typically of a politician, Mr Blair has yet to decide exactly what he will say in Cardiff, when the leaders grace the Kohl-Chirac text with a free-ranging debate about the future.

But there have been two developments worth noticing into their depths. The first is that, along with his other displays of reticent maturity, the British leader does not fear to embrace "Europe" where it seems to matter. More of the dreaded QMV — majority voting — doesn't disturb him. He's prepared to enter a grown-up debate, free from political hysteria, about the need for more Europe-wide action on crime-work, on the environment, on foreign and security policy. He's not proposing drastic constitutional innovation, but nor is he afraid, it seems, to work for and sell a stronger, deeper "Europe", as long as a serious effort is made to build its popular legitimacy. If something like this becomes the message out of Cardiff, with a few concrete ideas attached, it will set a seal on a presidency that took both Britain and Europe in an intelligent direction.

Second, however, the EMU problem can't be entirely detached. Bedding himself into Europe, Blair has made a big difference. He's begun to make Europe seem a normal part of Britain. Euro-scepticism — the Tory party — looks every day more disconnected from the real world. But, to pay full attention to Britain's version of political reform, the EU needs more assurance than it's getting that other things being equal, EMU is starting's destiny. The autumn story is: watch out for the language of rising commitment.

## Boneheads and martyrs

Roy Hattersley



THESE are desperate days for anyone who writes a political column. For only one party ever does or says anything of any real significance. The Conservatives are sinking under their own lack of weight and the Liberals — with the honourable exceptions of Don Foster and Charles Kennedy — have given up even trying to develop distinctive policies. Paddy Ashdown now openly rejoices that Tony Blair has become the natural heir to Gladstone and Asquith and strongly implies that, sooner or later, the centre-left will be reunited in an invincible coalition. Lloyd George was accused of not caring where the taxi went as long as he was driving. Mr Ashdown seems only interested in hitching a lift on Labour's bandwagon.

The Tories, on the other hand, seem less surprised by requirements than bewildered by the discovery that they are no longer the natural party of government. The shadow cabinet reshuffle was not so much a reinvigoration as a formal act of abdication. Any party leader who retains Andrew MacKay as a senior Opposition spokesman has clearly abandoned all hope of embarrassing the government. Last week, on one of his rare television appearances, Mr MacKay was at his bone-headed best. Asked if Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness should have been invited to the Stormont summer garden party, he announced that Mo Mowlam had missed a wonderful opportunity to make progress towards a lasting peace.

The Sinn Féin leaders should not, Mr MacKay insisted, be on any official guest list until the Republican paramilitaries begin to give up their weapons. Dr Mowlam must feel profoundly embarrassed that she had not thought of exclusion from garden parties as the ultimate weapon against the IRA.

THE real indication of the Tories' lack of talent is not, however, the retention of the sun-tanned but stupid Andrew MacKay, but the promotion of the ashen, though able, Ann Widdecombe. I mention Ms Widdecombe's physical attributes with some reluctance. For she has been subject to the sort of cheap abuse that no male politician would have to tolerate. But neither that — nor her deeply gratifying attack on Michael Howard during the Tory leadership election — can obscure the basic fact of Ms Widdecombe's political existence. She holds views on

policy which are eccentric to the point of ideological deviance. Ms Widdecombe is one of those people who believe they are right with such manic certainty that they are not so much willing, as anxious, to be burnt at the stake. Martyrdom may be proof of sanctity. It is not the ideal formula for winning elections.

Fanatics never learn. A couple of years ago Ms Widdecombe brought her party, as well as herself, into disrepute by defending the obnoxious practice of chaining pregnant women prisoners to their hospital beds. On Monday she attacked a decision to pay damages and compensation to one of the women who had been so badly used. Yet, in the Daily Mail, Simon Hester nominated her as the ideal candidate to succeed William Hague as Tory leader. She would only be ideal if the Conservatives wished to become a tiny, theocratic party, led by an ayatollah. That she should be thought a contender, even by the Tories' unreconstructed right, shows how crazy Conservatism has become.

One thing, however, must be said in Ms Widdecombe's favour. She does have policies — bizarre policies, but policies nevertheless. If her colleagues have two ideas to rub together, they are keeping them obsessively secret. David "Disenchanting" Willetts — the conduct which forced him to resign from the government apparently forgiven — appeared on radio last Monday to discuss student loans. His meaning was obscured by the use of laddish metaphors with which he was obviously not familiar. But I heard him say that he would support the government if it did what was right. If Mr Willetts has one brain — let alone the two with which he is sometimes credited — he ought to realise that few

### Under Hague, the Tories are not fit even for Opposition

people expected him to support the government if it did what was wrong.

I admit that the Tories face an unusual problem. They are accustomed to stealing their opponents' clothes, not hanging about naked whilst their enemies strut round the country in Conservative finery. Real caught the Whigs bathing in 1845. A hundred years later, Winston Churchill was persuaded to embrace most of the Attlee government's programme and insist that the Tories would do the same, only better. William Hague can hardly pursue the same tactic. Ann Widdecombe to provide a superior version of Tony Blair's conspicuous moderation? David Willetts to supply John Prescott's common touch? And, of course, Andrew MacKay to outsmart Gordon Brown? Perhaps Paddy Ashdown is right. The one way to government is cosying-up to Labour.

Labour's plans for devolution paradoxically will make local government even weaker than it is now

## Killing councils

Peter Hetherington

DEVOLUTION can mean many things. But in this dizzy, political world of constitutional reform, it has assumed a whole new meaning: the transfer of political power from London to Edinburgh and Cardiff. It is supposed to strengthen democracy by bringing government closer to the people. Ironically, it might do the opposite.

With home rule arriving next year north of the border, and west of Old's Dyke, this assertion might seem a contradiction in terms, especially with the first stirrings of change in England: nine regional development agencies will soon be formed as a prelude, perhaps, for full-blooded English devolution. Deputy

Prime Minister John Prescott would like to see elected regional assemblies in place soon after 2000, taking the agencies under their wing with a full range of economic, industrial, planning and transport powers. Fine. But please don't assume that this process will reinvigorate local democracy. Putting aside the Powellite assertion that power devolved is actually power retained — for Westminster will, in reality, control the purse strings — the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly could mean more power concentrated at the centre, although in Edinburgh and Cardiff rather than Whitehall. Unlike England, both countries now have a uniform single tier of local government.

The first warnings of a tightening central hand came a few days ago when

the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, warned councils to watch out after a series of scandals, involving multi-million pounds in the public works departments of two authorities (and maybe more). If they didn't put their town halls in order, powers would simply be removed. "A Scottish

### Many great social advances came from the town hall and not Whitehall

parliament will soon be here eager to please, and if local government fails to deliver, it will be totally subjugated," said a Government source unambiguously. Much the same threat has been made in England. Councils have to reform, or

wither away, says New Labour. And if they fail to perform, new agencies (super quangos again) — and, in the case of schools, a new breed of private education companies — will move in to take over. Already the schools minister, Stephen Byers (a leftwing education committee chairman in another political life) has effectively signalled the end of local education authorities.

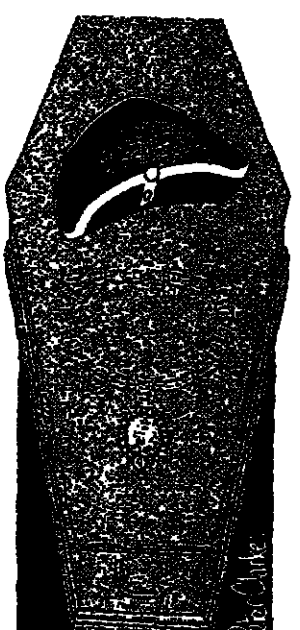
In short, Labour runs the risk of being even more hostile to local government than its Tory predecessor. Embarrassed by lurid headlines of sleaze and cronyism in town halls, Number 10 and the Scottish Office have a habit of reacting rather than thinking through the consequences of get-tough ultimatums.

Local government certainly has its problems, not least in being unable to raise much of its own cash

(under 20 per cent) after having many functions curtailed in the 80s. With powers removed, or reduced, why should the people like those from business and the mercantile class who selflessly brought so much vigour to town and city at the turn of the century bother to stand for councils? More importantly, why should people bother to turn out and vote (last month, in many cities, barely one in five did)?

Before it's too late, we should reverse the huge contribution the old corporations made to British life. Many of the great social advances this century — education, public health, clean water, social housing, electricity, gas, public transport — came from the town hall and not from Whitehall.

Releasing cash from the Whitehall straitjacket, and introducing a system of pro-



portional representation in local elections — thus guaranteeing a much-needed opposition in sleazy, one-party town halls — would do far more to reinvigorate local democracy than any devolution package.

But will it happen? Will the Government accept that a healthy democracy is a twin-track process with town halls sometimes challenging the centre and developing strategies for their communities that might conflict with a Westminster grand design?

If we stagger on like this dabbling in council reform, promising elected mayors — while denying councils the flexibility and funds to do the job, the inertia and voter apathy will intensify. And the quango state will have been cemented in Edinburgh as well as in London. So much for devolution heralding a new democracy.

صوتك من الامم



# The Guardian

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## A patient's right to know More details are needed

THE OLDEST professional conspiracy is coming to an end. No group likes having its work monitored, but one profession has remained supreme in its control over the performance of its members: the medical profession. For years social reformers have urged policy-makers to introduce medical audit, an independent audit of individual clinical competence. But the issue was regarded as so hot the Royal Commission on Health, which reported in 1979, refused to look at the idea. Even the boldest of health ministers refused to push the plan. The Patient's Charter, launched six years ago, carefully restricted itself to administrative measurements. Yet, suddenly, Frank Dobson has stood up in defence of patient rights. By next October he intends to produce preliminary clinical indicators which will allow patients to judge their local hospital in relation to death rates after operations, heart attacks, and fractured necks. Further clinical performance indicators are planned. Even more surprising, leading members of the medical profession have welcomed the move. What's going on?

There is one scandal which made audit possible: the Bristol Royal Infirmary doctors, who continued to operate on babies long after they should have stopped. Britain's biggest ever medical disciplinary inquiry, which concluded two weeks ago, found one Bristol doctor had a mortality rate of 60 per cent for hole in the heart operations when the national average was 14 per cent, while another, performing an

arterial switch procedure, had a two in three death rate when the national average was one in 10. In 59 operations, 29 babies died and four more were brain damaged. Another Bristol must not happen. In the Health Secretary's words: "We need a system which collects and monitors information on clinical performance, provides an early warning if things are going wrong, and then helps put things right."

Of course crude audit figures would be dangerous. They will need to be adjusted for age, severity, case mix and even social conditions. But the medical service has been conducting clinical audit for years: on maternal deaths, stillbirths, infant deaths and suicides. The problem is that they have remained confidential — and voluntary. In one region, one-third of surgeons and anaesthetists refuse to take part in the national peri-operative deaths inquiry. Even in the best region, 20 per cent refuse to participate. Clinical audit has been allowed to develop without central direction or local accountability. Doctors have decided which audits they want and in some hospitals have even kept the results secret from their managers.

Within the medical profession, progressive pioneers were pushing doctors to be more open. Brendan Devlin at the Royal College of Surgeons introduced a series of audits on crucial operations but was forced to keep them confidential. Dr Anthony Hopkins, director of the Royal College of Physicians, publicly damned audits last year for their poor standards and called for much clearer lines of accountability. America had open audit years ago, but the UK remained sceptical. This became more difficult with the successful introduction of audit in Scotland, which is already helping to raise standards. Bristol changed everything. Even the BMA called for the collec-

tion of death rates, readmissions, and re-operation rates to prevent another Bristol. What's still needed is the detail. All we have at present are Whitehall leaks and a copy of the Health Secretary's speech to backbenchers. This is much too important to be left to spin doctors and private parliamentary meetings. Something much more substantial is needed.

## Archer's tale Neill should have a look

LIKE all the best Jeffrey Archer stories, this one has a twist at every turn. No sooner had the mega-selling novelist delivered a point-by-point rebuttal of the battery of claims against him than a new one popped up — like an extra character on page 178. Lord Archer had sought to deny, play down or otherwise defeat a set of allegations — unleashed by journalist Paul Foot in the London Evening Standard under the headline, "Why this man is unfit to be mayor" — with an article of his own.

The would-be Conservative candidate for London's top job dismissed charges of past expenses fiddling as a minor "discrepancy". He waved aside claims of shoplifting by explaining that mere absent-mindedness made him walk out of a Toronto menswear shop with two suits over his shoulder back in 1975. He even had an answer to the most serious allegation raised against him, that of insider dealing. He did not deny that he bought 25,000 shares in Anglia TV the day after a secret merger deal was done, nor that his wife, Mary, was on the Anglia board. But Lord Archer insisted he acted not on inside intelligence but on a general observation offered at a dinner party hosted by the former Express editor, Sir

Nicholas Lloyd. The trouble for Lord Archer is that Sir Nicholas has checked his diary and discovered that the party took place after Lord A bought his shares. To put it at its kindest, Jeffrey Archer has shown that he still has what his wife once called "a genius for inaccurate precis".

What should be done? Some senior Tories want the former deputy chairman to be investigated by the party's post-Neil Hamilton ethics committee. Except that body does not yet fully exist. A simpler solution would be to refer the entire, bulging Archer file to Sir Patrick Neill's public standards committee — which could then rule on whether he was fit for high office. There Lord Archer would be guaranteed a non-partisan hearing, free of the inevitable back-scratching and politicking of an internal Tory inquiry. If it saved his career, not only hard-core Conservatives would cheer. Others, too, would welcome him as one of the livelier characters in British politics — with a lucrative knack for charitable fundraising. It would also set a useful precedent, establishing the Neill committee as the ethics filter for all public life. If Labour should have a troublesome candidate, they could refer him or her to Neill, too. Lord Archer should suggest the move himself. The constant doubt over his trustworthiness is bad politics — even if it would make cracking fiction.

## Welded to truth Belarus gates the embassies

THE VIENNA Convention on diplomatic relations does not explicitly ban a host country from welding shut the gates of a foreign embassy. But Article 22 which says that "the premises of the (diplomatic) mis-

sion are inviolable" seems an adequate prohibition — to everyone — except, that is, the President of Belarus. Yesterday Alexander Lukashenko backed down slightly from his ultimatum to the entire diplomatic community in Minsk. They now have a week to vacate their premises before the plumbers move in, supposedly to make sure that the compound where all the embassies are located does not overflow with sewage. But that will not end the confrontation.

Outside the Vienna Convention, there is a less explicit understanding to govern the seamier side of relations between diplomat and host. Plumbers in the Watergate sense of the word are entitled to try planting bugs if they can get away with it. (This can give lifting the seat an entirely new meaning.) Locally employed staff are expected to rifle files and snitch photocopies. Such goings-on did not end with the cold war; friends spy on friends as well as on enemies.

But Mr Lukashenko has left everyone's men and women in Minsk dumbfounded. His motives are unclear: one suggestion is that he wants to move the whole diplomatic quarter. There are also precedents for achieving that more subtly. The best way is never to repair the drains at all — literally flushing out the foreign diplomats to seek a better location. The most likely explanation is that this self-willed ruler (insulting him has just become a criminal offence) has got hung up on a trivial issue. The 22 countries affected are hoping to find — what else? — a diplomatic solution.

The crisis may not find much space in Belarus's opposition media. As an Article XIX study of press freedom in Belarus has just reported, Mr Lukashenko supports "counter-measures" against any critical newspaper. They might even get their doors welded up.

## Letters to the Editor

### Words about a writer

QUITE by chance, I visited the mausoleum 15 miles outside Taos where D.H. Lawrence's ashes are interred (US neglects "classy" from Notts, June 10). My memory is that its condition bears no resemblance to the description in the Guardian. It was surprisingly trim and well-kept. Of course, 10 months is a long time in literary heritage. Stephen Frears, National Film and Television School, Beaconsfield, Bucks.

YOU tell of neighbours describing Lawrence as a "hard-core" which you say means "classy". This is nonsense. The Oxford English dictionary defines marly as "sulky, sullen, spoilt". As anyone from the East Midlands would tell you, a marly is a miserable so-and-so. And I'm still marly about a feature a while back that said Rull was on the Atlantic coast. Phil Smith, Oslo, Norway.

COULD Welsh-medium secondary schools in English-speaking parts of Wales do better than their English counterparts because in any experience in north Wales the Welsh schools were better funded and equipped and took only the top stream of Welsh-speaking children who would do well in any language? Colin Paxton, Stockport, Cheshire.

RE local councils' recent announcement of a review of whether to abolish the refuse disposal charge component of council tax bills and replace it with a charge on how much rubbish the taxpayer produces: does this explain the sudden decision of the Rolling Stones to cancel their tour of the UK and why Ginger Spice has fled the country? Jarvis, Manchester.

TONY Green from Hebden Bridge wrote (Letters, June 3) that there was music, dance, poetry and story-telling sessions in his village and asked if this cultural activity was limited to Yorkshire. It is not limited to Yorkshire. It is limited to Hebden Bridge. Stephen Thompson, Preston, Lancs.

WOULD the kind lady expressing her disgust at two people fornicating (Letters, June 10) please be more precise as to which page of which of the many parts of the Saturday Guardian I could find this offensive picture? James Hazan, London.

A CONFERENCE on social exclusion is charging delegates £150 each to attend (Society, June 10). Hilary Patrick, Edinburgh.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. The Country Diary is on page 10.

## Frantic for footie ...

SUPPORTING England certainly brings out the worst in confused liberals like Mark Steel, who would appear to be using the World Cup as an excuse for an orgy of self-hatred, inverted racism and collective guilt (Come on Tunisia, June 10). Supporting England does not imply support for colonialism, racism or slavery. I will be supporting England quite simply because I am English and it would be very odd for me to support any other team, particularly as it is one of the most multi-racial. I am also a cockney and a Spurs supporter and it would be gratifying for me if the winning goal in the final were to be scored by Sol Campbell or Les Ferdinand, both of whom fall into that category and both of whom happen to be black. Richard Cotton, London.

"I neither white nor a patriot, but I'm not ashamed to drape myself in the St George flag because this symbol today expresses nothing more than allegiance to a football team. Traditional British nationalism no longer works."

The new PC codes of conduct at matches are worse than what we had before. The old nationalism only demanded that we stood up during the national anthem. Now we are told to respect our opponents' anthems and to sit down and behave ourselves.

Yet the whole point of supporting your team is to offend your opponents. Take that away and what are you left with? Mexican waves. Duleep Althiraj, London.

COULDN'T believe my eyes when I read your World Cup guide (June 9). I am Bulgarian and read: "Tibit for a dull game: around 300,000 Bulgarian Muslims fled the country to Turkey in 1989 after five years of official discrimination". I know that when one mentions Bulgaria in England it brings to mind two historical facts: discrimination against Muslims; and the murder of Georgi Markov. But the reason why people all over the world love the World Cup is that, for its duration, politics stop mattering and it's only the game. The spirit of the World Cup is of friendship, forgiveness and the present. Since the game between the English and the German soldiers on Christmas Day during the first world war, international football has always represented "relief from politics". Louisa Pironkova, London.

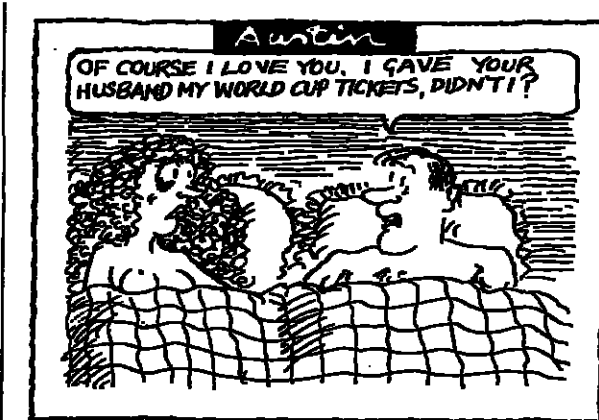
ONCE again an English footballer demonstrates his courage by savagely beating a woman (Collymore attacks Ulrika in bar, June 10). I hope Collymore's outstanding bravery is not shown

in England's matches, otherwise they might as well come home now. Ron Graves, Birkenhead.

THOUGHT the only tush in the World Cup was a Scotland defender. Judging by the "feature" on the England players' horoscopes (Stars in their eyes, June 9), there's clearly a lot more to come. Will you be sitting open a goat to forecast the result of the first England match? Ken MacIntyre, Guildford, Surrey.

MY house is a football-free zone, so it was very convenient to have all the sports and World Cup coverage in separate sections which could be easily disposed of unread, the World Cup brochure in the waste paper basket and the broadsheet section under the car's foot. But I have paid the full 45p. Could those of us who don't want to read about the World Cup have their Guardian at a reduced price? Richard Ashby, Bristol.

RE Nick Rider's letter (June 8) and his reference to "self-pitying, mewling jocks". Could you publish Mr Rider's full address as I would like to discuss his concerns on a more personal basis? Ian Givens, Kinghorn, Fife.



## Japanese consumed by anxiety

YOUR leader on the Japanese communitarian (Spend and Spend, June 10) highlights the country's dilemma. How can the wealthy Japanese be persuaded to spend, to consume their way out of recession?

The long-term answer lies, paradoxically, in improved public welfare provision. The Japanese are locked into a system of "private provision" for many important goods — housing, health, education, pensions. Public expenditure is much lower even than ours, as a proportion of gross domestic product. Ordinary Japanese citizens must carry all the major risks of life upon their own individual shoulders, without collective support.

The country is a Thatcherite paradise. If the Japanese are worried about the future (and aren't we all?) the rational, intelligent course for them is to build up personal savings as the only available means of reassurance. In those circumstances, current consumption must be curtailed. They cannot afford to consume. Hence the eight-year recession.

Is that not, truly, a paradox? That a modern consumer economy should be unsustainable, unless the great risks of life — ignorance, homelessness, ill-health, poverty in old age — are shared collectively, by way of public provision? Roger Warren Evans, London.

## Archer shopped Inside out

JEFFREY Archer's excuse for his Toronto shopping spree (Diary, June 10) was that he was confused by a walkway that joined two shops. The walkway is between Simpsons (now The Bay) department store and the Eaton Centre, which contains several hundred shops on four levels. One would expect an Oxford-educated man with three A-levels, six O-levels, a diploma from the International Federation of Physical Culture and two years at a Californian university to be able to tell the difference between a shop, a department store and a shopping centre. Martin Bromstein, Kingston-upon-Thames.

THE entries for the competition to design the Scottish parliament building all concentrate primarily upon the building as statement of power to the surrounding populace. This is out of place in our time when the church is no longer all powerful and magnates maintain their power without intimidating any local populace.

There have been two major changes in the way human beings live. The first was when our remote ancestors left the shelter of the woods to go out on to the plains to hunt. The second was when our immediate predecessors changed to living most of our lives inside buildings, especially in cool climates. This second revolution is still hardly recognised in architectural training and practice. The parliament building will be a success or a failure according to how well it enables activities to go on inside it, not whether it looks astonishing from Carlton Hill. The most important inside space must be the debating chamber, the shape of which will determine the relationships of the elected members. To decide this crucial environmental form merely by making it fit into an exterior box or drum form is nothing short of lunacy and has no place in our world. The inside are the crucially important factor. As long as the building has a lively, varied skyline to harmonise with the existing Edinburgh skyline and is of decent human scale it will be a success as townscape. Dennis White, Dundee.

## ... but more circumspect about cricket

TOOK my 10-year-old son to his first Test match at Edgbaston and we sat with the "Barney Army" (Stewart on front foot, Sport, June 9). Far from it being an outrageous display of poor behaviour we, and many around us, found the whole business hilarious. First, there was the group with face-painted crosses of St George, wearing identical white capgulls with letters on so that when they stood in a line it said something slightly but not too rude. They all periodically lapsed into conversation about deconstructionism.

Then there were the Melon-heads, each one wearing a hollowed-out melon with ears, handles etc, half a dozen in

fuzzes, a group of Arabian head dresses (four or five Elvises with black plastic hair, not counting the mass of orange, green and pink wigs. Periodically all this lot got up and conged around the stand, falling impressively to throw beer over anyone other than themselves. All this in stark contrast with the frighteningly unpleasant atmosphere of the Wolves v West Brom match earlier this year.

As for devout humanity, there are no signs of the members' pavilion at Lords? The very thought of it makes me shudder. Howard Parker, Wolverhampton.

JIM White is right (Winter sport crosses cricket boundaries, June 2) that cricket needs "role models and heroes", but he paints a rather distorted picture of cricket in the UK. There has been a tremendous resurgence in cricket in schools and clubs since the establishment of the England and Wales Cricket Board last year. There are now more than a million school children playing cricket, of whom half are girls, more than 50,000 Kwik Cricket sets have been distributed and the number of clubs with youth sections has grown to 4,000. Richard Peel, England and Wales Cricket Board, London.

## Paedophile rings: everywhere or nowhere?

AS CHAIRMAN of the social services committee at the time of the allegations of child abuse in Sunderland children's homes, I am deeply disappointed by your article (The most secret crime, June 3). It is based on a self-seeking interpretation of events by the former director of social services, Colin Smart.

It is grossly misleading to suggest that Mr Smart is gagged. If he has evidence that deserves investigation, he is at liberty to contact the proper authorities — police, SSI, NSPCC or the council. When allegations about Witherack House emerged in 1991, investigations were undertaken by the police and social services with the SSI kept informed. Subsequent al-

legations by former residents of Witherack House have also been independently investigated by the NSPCC and a police investigation is ongoing. To dismiss this body of work is outrageous and a gross insult to the considerable efforts of the many dedicated professionals involved to ensure that similar abuses never happen again.

There is an equally plausible alternative conspiracy theory that an alliance of zealots, for various motives, are seeking to create a new Salem — a spectra of evil forces exploiting children hidden beneath the surface of respectable society. In the early 1990s it was all about satanic cults, now it is a national paedophile ring. Into this inflamma-

ble mixture step those with least expertise and responsibility — the media. Personally, I find it hard to credit there is any national conspiracy, but what I can say for certain is that your portrayal of an admittedly bad episode in Sunderland's childcare history is perverse, malicious and downright dangerous.

Even more disgraceful is the lingering finger of suspicion pointed at the existing care of vulnerable children in Sunderland. The present management of social services is totally committed to providing services of the highest possible standards and dealing quickly with any hint of inappropriate behaviour. Cllr Eric Timmins, City of Sunderland.

EVERYONE who works in adolescent psychiatry (as I did), social services or police child protection units knows of rings of abuse, with the same names cropping up in so many different organisations that only the most glib would see this as coincidence. However, we all know how difficult it can be to take legal proceedings: witnesses, ie victims, who are too scared to testify; lack of corroboratory evidence; the length of time between abuse and disclosure etc. And if you do get to court it's not much better: judges still allow defence barristers to terrorise vulnerable witnesses (I know because I was involved in such a court case last year). David Dallard, Bristol.

## Why Dobson's prescription for good practice won't work

FRANK Dobson's response to the Bristol tragedies can only be welcomed as a significant step in the march towards realising the rhetoric of patient rights and conquering the paternalism which arguably dominates medical practice. Doctors called to account, June 10.

Currently the patient has no right to information about the risks involved in the proposed treatment. Access to such information relies solely on the good practice of the doctor. If challenged in court over the amount of information disclosed, other doctors effectively decide the standard of good medical practice.

Frank Dobson, however, is wrong in asserting that knowledge of risk is a "prerequisite for patients to exercise their common law right to informed consent".

There is no such right: the House of Lords refused to incorporate the doctrine of informed consent into English law in 1995. If Frank Dobson's

objective is "to restore public confidence in the quality of health care", he might first familiarise himself with the current state of English law. James R Harrison, Berkhamsted.

IF FRANK Dobson wants me to do further audits, then he must be aware of the consequences. The current information systems within the NHS are hopelessly inadequate and not designed for audit. I currently have to balance audit against spending time on patient care.

Therefore if he wants genuine, accurate and validated statistics on the outcomes of my clinical practice, then a huge investment of resources of time and money will be needed. Otherwise any statistics generated will have the accuracy of tabloid headlines. Dr William Notcutt, (Consultant in anaesthesia) James Paget Hospital, Grays, South, Norfolk.

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**HOLDEN, Margaret**, suddenly at her home in Harpenden on 6th June, 1892. Margaret (former editor of the *British Mycological Society Bulletin*) will be sadly missed by her family and many friends. Funeral service at West Herts. and Bucks Crematorium.

## Engagements

**LEWIN/DINWIDDY.** The engagement is announced between Peter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lewin of Goddards, Surrey, and Rachel, younger daughter of the late Professor and Mrs. John Dinwiddy.

**STALLARD/RINGROSE.** Christine and David Stallard, of Cape Town, South Africa, are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter, Julia, to Richard, son of Mary and John Ringrose, of Surrey.

**To place your announcement telephone**







## 12 SPORTS NEWS

# The Battle of Wounded Knee goes Graf's way

Frank Keating sees the former champion's latest comeback

**S**TEFFI GRAF hit the comeback trail yesterday — and for almost an hour it looked as if she was going to hit the buffers as well. After four days under an umbrella or practising indoors since her arrival in Birmingham on Sunday, the seven-times Wimbledon champion went down 5-7 in the opening set of her first-round match against the game Australian qualifier, Rennae Stubbs in the DFS Classic here at Edgbaston.

Graf had last played in England two years ago when she won the last set of the 1996 Wimbledon final and the Duchess of Kent came down to do the honours with the celebrated golden biscuit.

After yesterday's first-set alarm on the green, soft and low-skidding centre court Graf took comparative command and closed

down the match 6-2, 6-4. With the first set lasting 48 minutes, the match took almost two hours which represented a decent work-out for the former champion.

Her presence again in the Wimbledon draw holds promise of a women's tournament of relish and romance on SW19's strawberry fields, starting on Monday week.

Graf will be 29 on Sunday and, however uneasy she might have looked yesterday in her first serious match for a long time, there is obviously no immediate intention to abdicate her monarchy.

Afterwards she was all smiles, mixing her generally happy demeanour with a few rueful asides: "After that first set anything might have happened; I just couldn't find any rhythm at all. But it did me good. We had some great rallies. Rennae is my best friend on the

circuit so we had fun as well. But the ball just didn't bounce. It sure made me bend my knees."

"The target I set myself throughout the year was to play Wimbledon. I need many more matches under my belt. From Birmingham I go to Eastbourne; everything geared to getting to Wimbledon."

"I had my knee operation a year ago and it turned out to be a severe one. I didn't know it would be so long in recovery. It just went on and on. I never considered complete retirement but wondered if I would get to Wimbledon again."

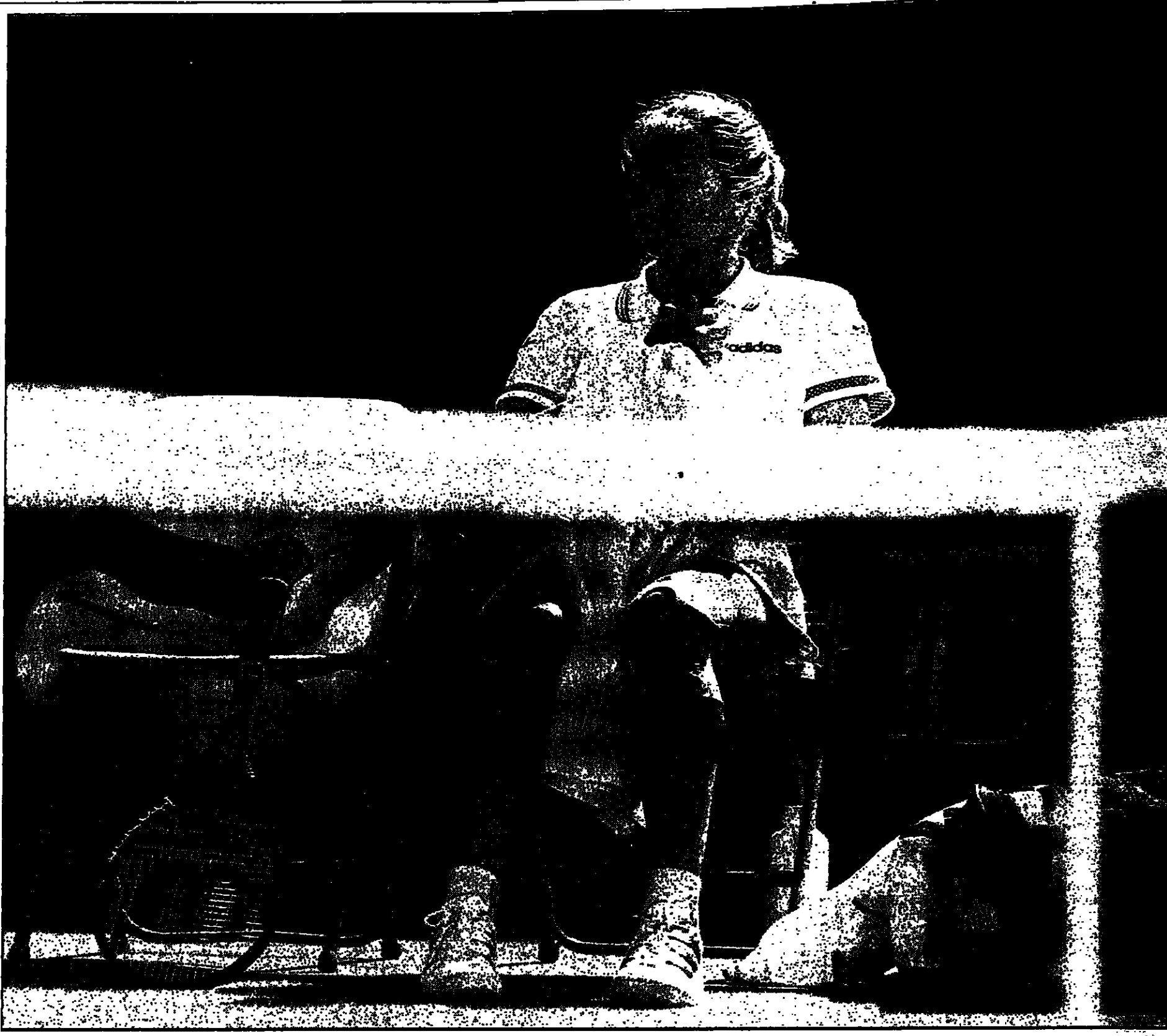
Back to world No. 1? "Such things aren't even inside my mind yet; I just want to get fit again and keep enjoying tennis."

Her buddy Stubbs, a powerful Sydney tomboy, was also making a comeback after injury last year and had to qualify. "Steffi for Wimbledon again? Once she gets a couple of good matches under her belt there, who knows? She is capable of anything. She said to me at the end today, 'Hey, that was a pretty good match considering everything.' I said to her, 'Girl, on that court you're lucky you still have a terrific sliced backhand.'"

As well as a recent hamstring injury, the latest chart-topper in Graf's doctor's log was the knee damage and yesterday she trod gingerly on the sodden court.

The skies had at last relented and the pewty clouds rolled down towards the Cotswolds to reveal a blustery late afternoon blessed with bright sunlight. The service toss of the German is still the highest of them all, and yesterday's winds aggravated the general insecurities of the former champion. But she dug out the skidders with a will and, often, a smile. In the two hours she was on court she faced, and survived, enough Edgbaston shooters and daisy-cutters to make the England batsman Nasser Hussain blow a fuse-box of rages.

Because of her inactivity — she has played only two tournaments in the past 52



Sitting pretty... Steffi Graf in contemplative mood during her two-hour match against the Australian Rennae Stubbs at Edgbaston yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN GONICK

weeks — Graf has fallen off the WTA tour computer rankings for the first time since she arrived in October 1982. If she wins this title she will be placed 96th, but one wonders how the Wimbledon seeding committee will rank their former queen.

Graf was 15 when she first played doubles here in 1984, and watching her

then as she precociously raced between the tramlines like a playful puppy and hit whizzbang winners made one wonder if she would be able to maintain that voracious relish.

Now we know she has — despite being a dollar millionairess many times over, despite the long log of debilitating injuries and despite personal problems

relating to her father Peter in the early Nineties which led to his imprisonment for tax offences.

The first memory of the bounding teenage prodigy was of her boisterous speed, and that all-court quality remains fundamental to the Graf phenomenon. Not that there was much skipping about at full pelt yesterday. But she is

back, smile in place and thumping ground-strokes as well.

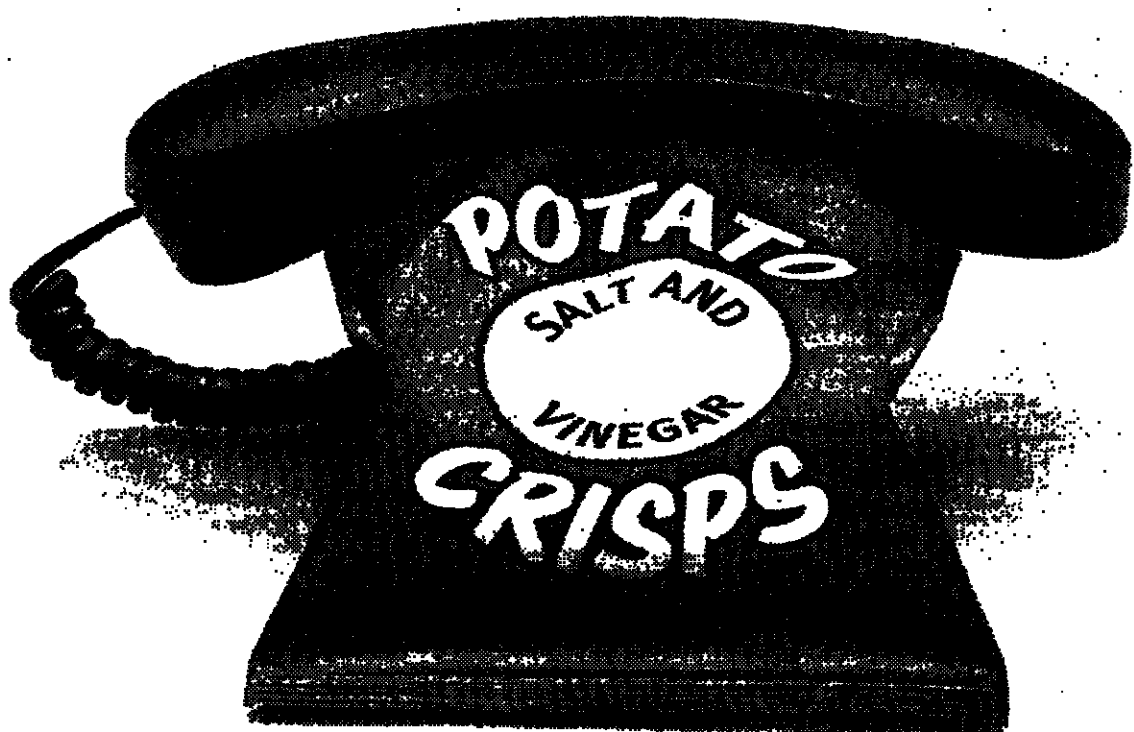
She is not going to retire to spend more time with her dogs and classic collection of modern art. Certainly she could have curseyed off the stage on a high that last time we saw her in the 1996 Wimbledon. After it she went on to New York to win her 21st Grand

Siam title — three behind Margaret Smith's 24, gained in less competitive times, but ahead of Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert (18 each) and the legendary Helen Wills Moody's 19.

She is back once more for further challenges — between sheltering from the English rain in June, that is.

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN GONICK

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The Guardian Thursday June 11 1998

### Racing

## Eighth and race-fixing

Victory Note set for Roy

Victory Note set for Roy

Newbury Jackpot

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